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CLAN WAR

Black Front against the NSDAP

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Andrey Vasilchenko's new book gives us a complete picture of Germany in the 1920s and 1940s, of the struggle of the leaders of various parties and groups. The heroes of the book had a huge impact on German politics, its ups and downs, successes and mistakes.

The fates of two of them - Otto and Gregor Strasser, revolutionary National Socialists - are truly unique, because the history of Germany at that time consisted of many contradictions. Relatives suddenly became enemies, and people holding different social views offered them the hand of friendship — and all this at a time when the country was fragmented by endless coups, uprisings, and murders. The book is based on previously unpublished

unique materials from German archives. BBC 63.3(0)6

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Introduction

The 20th century, which not so long ago became history for us, was rich in new political phenomena. Against the backdrop of liberalism, social democracy, and conservatism familiar to a person of the 19th century, new unknown concepts appeared: Bolshevism, fascism, national socialism. Behind them were not just political ideas, but it was already a pronounced political practice that made these new phenomena easily recognizable. Over time, these concepts have turned into a bogey, having lost their original meaning. In the 1950s, anyone in the United States could be called a Bolshevik for civil rights. And remember the beginning of the 90s in our country! Anyone was enrolled as a fascist. The united opposition accused the initiators of liberal reforms of fascism. The liberals themselves took for fascists and communists, and patriots of the soil - in general, all those who did not agree with the course being pursued. In the correspondence field of Mike, Zionists and national patriots hung similar labels on each other.

At the same time, the history of the 1920s and 1940s knew many other concepts that gradually disappeared from the political scene. Their name alone might seem to modern man the fruit of

some post-modernist game, a combination of incompatible concepts: revolutionary national socialism, national socialist anti-fascism. But for Germ

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On the eve of Hitler's rise to power, these phenomena were taken for granted.

In those days, Germany was torn apart by many unthinkable contradictions. It only now seems that her whole history first anticipated the rise of the Nazis to power, and then bashfully got rid of the traces of the Third Reich. In fact, everything was much more complicated. What can I say, even if the very term "Third Reich" at first had nothing to do with the Nazis. Arthur Meller van den Broek, who invented it, flatly refused to cooperate with Hitler. Nowadays, many people think that the Weimar Republic, the most democratic at that time, could have been saved. The fact is very debatable. Everyone hated her: students and professors, workers and officials, military men and housewives. It seemed as if she had come into the world at all, to be put to death by one of the numerous radical forces. Democracy, brought on the bayonets of the victorious countries, was hated by all social strata. In those days, the Germans were clearly not disposed towards a democratic way of solving the existing problems. Conspiracies, uprisings, coups, street riots, political assassinations shook this European country from year to year. Even the supporters of the Weimar system preferred to restore order with the help of semi-official paramilitaries. Let us recall at least the same "Imperial

banner".

At first glance, the most incredible combinations appeared in this political crucible. One of them was revolutionary National Socialism, represented by Otto Strasser. This man, as it were, became a symbol of the difficult German fate. In third

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Reich, his supporters were persecuted as ardent anti-fascists, and Hitler considered Otto Strasser himself a personal enemy. In France, the authorities put him in a concentration camp, as they saw him as the most radical Nazi. In Austria, flirting with the Bolsheviks was reproached, and in Canada, support was denied because of insufficient contacts with Moscow and the Communists. Hitler deprived him of his citizenship, which was in no hurry to return the post-war democratic government of Germany. His life and work is a complete paradox. Although he didn't think so. He did not fit into the bipolar model, where there were only friends and enemies, white and black, because he embodied the multicoloredness of German politics. It is far from accidental that Otto Strasser was one of the first to formulate the idea of the collapse of the traditional political picture of the world. For him there was no more right or left. His current followers speak of a "third way", although it would be more correct to speak of a fourth. We just now have a controversy about the need to assess political life in a coordinate system with two vectors. Strasser came up with this idea back in the 1930s. It was then that he proclaimed the existence of four fronts: conservative reaction, liberal reaction, liberal revolution and conservative revolution. |

So who was Otto Strasser? Prophet or loser? Dogmatist or visionary? A political rogue or a man trying to save his country?

Part |

THE FIRST CONFLICT IN THE NAZI PARTY

Chapter 1

THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF OTTO STRASSER

Otto Strasser was born on September 10, 1897 in the Bavarian city of Windenheim. The Strasser family had five children: Gregor, five years older than Otto, Paul, Olga, and Anton, who was born much later. Otto's parents came from bureaucratic families that were by no means particularly wealthy. The head of the family, Peter Strasser, worked in the office of the local court. As in all families of German officials, he paid great attention to the cultural and spiritual self-education of children. In his biography, one of the brothers, Paul, describes the care with which their father took care of their upbringing: 6 11 o'clock. It was the time of the strictest ban on conversations.

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But there was always a temptation to tell you that you read 6 interesting books." Among the favorite authors of Strasser Sr. were eminent economists: Adam Smith, Adolf Wagner. Most of all, however, he valued Friedrich List.

"Our mother," wrote Paul Strasser, "all her life was not only very pious, but was interested in all spiritual and political events. It was also important that our father, not only by his profession, but also by his essence, was a political person." It was a pleasure for him to study economics and history in his spare time, which was reflected in numerous books that he published at the end of the 19th century under the pseudonym Paul Weger. Most of his works were published in the New Essence book series. It is in these little books that one can find the roots of the political and ideological convictions of the Strasser brothers. Their father preached national, Christian socialism, which at that time seemed to many to be a panacea for all the ills of capitalist society.

Strasser Sr. saw a "new path" in the pursuit of social justice and the improvement of the living conditions of all strata. Otto and Gregor absorbed these views, as they say, with their mother's milk.

After graduating from the gymnasium at the Burghaus, Gregor decided to study pharmacy at the University of Munich. He seems to have taken this decision for financial reasons. Studying as a pharmacist was not so long and ruinous as to become an unbearable burden for the family. The professions of a pharmacist or pharmacist could very quickly bring profit and recoup the financial costs of studying. Otto pref

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people to choose another path. After graduating from a real school in Meggendorf and a senior real school in Munich, he began to study law and economics.

When World War I began, Otto dropped out of school, followed Gregor as a volunteer at the front and was enrolled in the 4th Bavarian Light Artillery Regiment, becoming the youngest volunteer from Bavaria. He went through the whole war. He entered the army on August 2, 1914, and was demobilized on June 30, 1919. The first three years of service was a simple soldier. Then he received the rank of non-commissioned officer, finished the war in the uniform of a lieutenant. For bravery in battle he received the Iron Crosses of the first and second classes, and for exceptional valor he was presented to the Order of Max-Josef. This order was not just the highest Bavarian award, its owner was immediately enrolled in the nobility. The defeat of Germany in the First World War prevented Otto from receiving this award. Like millions of front-line soldiers, the young Bavarian contrasted his military experiences with a senseless existence in a peaceful life. He was confused and could not properly orient himself.

On the eve of the mobilization, Otto, together with his brother Gregor, took part in the liquidation of the Bavarian Soviet Republic. Being in the ranks of the volunteer corps created by Ritter von Epp, in the spring of 1919 they fought fierce battles against the "Red Army". In July 1919, Gregor and Otto returned to civilian life. From that moment on, their paths diverged.

Gregor, who became a pharmacist, settled in Landshut, where he immediately began to actively participate in the activities on

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nationalist circles. Even before the massacre with the Soviet Republic in Bavaria, he was appointed chairman of the Union of Nationally Oriented Soldiers. Together with his associates in May 1919, he carried out numerous propaganda activities. Their goal was to create paramilitary formations - the Schutzbunds, which were called upon to save the country from the communist contagion. It was assumed that the rebirth of Germany would begin with these illegal organizations. Gregor Strasser quickly managed to assemble a well-armed group, which mainly consisted of former officers. It is noteworthy that in this organization, which was called the "Assault Battalion Lower Bavaria", there was a certain Heinrich Himmler, who later became the Reichsfuehrer SS. It was then that Gregor, who had numerous connections with nationalist and militaristic organizations, first met Adolf Hitler. Gregor Strasser, who bowed before Field Marshal Ludendorff, was simply bewitched by Hitler. Strasser did not hesitate to admire his qualities as a future Fuhrer. It was Gregor Strasser and his people who created the first Gau of the Nazi Party, becoming the organizational leader of the NSDAP in Lower Bavaria.

Unlike his brother, Otto did not immediately find his political vocation. In his early youth he leaned towards Christian socialism. But combat experience highlighted somewhat different contours of the future society. He did not recognize either Bolshevism or revanchist nationalism. He frankly despised the outrageous anti-Semites. In the early 1920s, it was finally determined

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poured with an attitude towards the royal dynasty, considered her leadership of the country during the WAR a fatal mistake.

Deciding to continue his studies in 1919, Otto began to earn a living by taking a job as a stenographer in the Berlin Reichstag. At the university, he had a violent temper, rioted, and in 1920 even created the "Academic Union of War Veterans", which existed as a subsidiary of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. This association set the main goal of supporting the solidarity of the "trench brotherhood" and a constant reminder of the suffering of front-line soldiers during the war years. It was in this that the student at the University of Berlin saw the prerequisite for the coming spiritual and economic renewal of the country. In the "Academic Union" Otto Strasser led the economic department. Political fame came to him as a socialist, who was even elected to the so-called student parliament. There he was noticed by one of the leaders of the Berlin Social Democrats, Dr. Sonnenstein. The young man was invited to join the "Socialist Bureau". This organization already included the young Heinrich Brüning, the future Chancellor of Germany, who was then in charge of student accommodation. Strasser himself was in charge of issues of social assistance to former front-line soldiers. It was then that he came to the conclusion that a clear and precise anti-capitalist program was needed to implement the reforms. He wrote about this in the socialist newspaper Forwards (Forward). Soon a response came from the editorial office, which stated that the publication was very interested in articles about the living conditions and life of students.

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The accession of Otto Strasser to the Social Democratic Party of Germany was dictated solely by ideological, and by no means career considerations. This confirmed his behavior during the Kapp Putsch. Although Otto Strasser shared certain nationalist slogans inherent in many front-line soldiers, he did not join the rebels. He was confused by the demand for the restoration of the monarchy. It was this circumstance that predetermined his assessment of the putsch as a counter-revolutionary rebellion. Almost immediately after his appointment as vice-president of the "Republican Union of Leaders" Strasser had to fight against the "white", monarchist freikorps. He, as a demobilized lieutenant, led the actions of three "proletarian hundreds" who fought against the rebels in the center of Berlin. Ironically, in those days he had to fight against Captain Ehrhardt's Marine Brigade, an organization with which he later maintained close political ties.

Apparently, his hundreds did not put down the rebellion very diligently, since Ehrhardt soon handed over power in the country to Kapp and General Lutwitz. But soon the victorious rebels lost control of the German capital. In many factories in Berlin, the Social Democrats succeeded in rousing the workers to a political strike. Kapp and the "whites" could not hold on to power.

The joy of this victory was overshadowed by the struggle for the Ruhr, which took place in March-April 1920. When on March 14 it became known about the defeat of the rebels, the working groups captured Essen, Dortmund

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and Dunsburg. They managed to knock out parts of the Reichswehr and Freikorps from there. Negotiations with the insurgent workers were to be conducted by Severing¹, who was elevated by the government to the rank of imperial commissar. On March 25, in the town of Bielefeld, he signed an agreement with the rebels, which provided, in exchange for the disarmament of the people's militia, the punishment of the rebellious counter-revolutionaries and the granting of control over the Ruhr area to the workers. Moreover, the cleansing of the state apparatus and the partial nationalization of industrial enterprises were supposed.

Many workers were misled by these promises and laid down their arms. The Reichswehr, however, used the respite they had received to gather together all the military units under the command of General Vater. On April 2, 180,000 men, led by Vater, invaded the Ruhr. First of all, he began to "punish" the communists. Actions of retaliation turned into a bloody massacre. In a few days, the Ruhr uprising was crushed. |

Under pressure from the Freikorps and the Reichswehr, the Social Democratic government decided to cancel the Bielefeld Agreement. As a formal pretext, accusations against Severing that he did not have the authority to conclude such pacts were used. ⁷

All this had a depressing effect on

¹ Carl Severing, a prominent figure in the Social Democratic Party, in 1918 a member of the Council of People's and Soldiers' Deputies in Bielefeld. In 1919-1920 he was the imperial commissar of Westphalia. Repeatedly elected to the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag. Twice he served as Minister of the Interior of Prussia (1921-1926, 1930-1932). In 1930-1932 he was an imperial

minister of the interior.

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Otto Strasser, who was a consistent supporter of mass nationalization. Struck by such a betrayal, he announced his withdrawal from the Social Democratic Party. For such behavior, Strasser was later called "frantic" by the Social Democrats more than once. "Obviously, his inherent methods, the imitation of communist phraseology, could be a noticeable competitor to the extreme left. After all, he was not only a social demo

Krat and an employee of the newspaper Forbarts!, but also a member of the board of the Republican Union of Leaders, one of the newspapers of those days wrote. Otto Strasser caused no small surprise when, as a member of the board of the union, he called for any armed action. The opinion was expressed that he was either crazy or a provocateur. But both accusations could hardly be attributed to his political figure. "Otto Strasser was the kind of person who could not get full satisfaction from politics if it was not connected with bloodthirstiness and bloody whims," wrote one of the SAPG newspapers.

Otto Strasser, completely entangled in political games, decided to leave Berlin. Now he was disgusted with them. "I was disappointed with what was happening in Germany and felt like a ship without a helmsman," he wrote in his memoirs.

Completely demoralized, Otto returned to Bavaria. During this time, he experienced a sense of political emptiness, not knowing what to do. He no longer trusted his father. "For my parents, life flowed as it did during the burdens of my childhood. Father still served in the 6th city court, every Sunday he

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dil the church for Mass, and on the way back he debated politics. The mother is old. Paul became a Benedictine monk, and his younger brother Anton was still at school. Gregor, who was five years older than me, got married. My sister also has a family.

The only person who tried to understand Otto was Gregor. He invited his younger brother to a meeting with Hitler and Ludendorff. Naturally, Gregor hoped that Otto would join the National Socialists. Otto, touched by his brother's concern, decided to go to the meeting just so as not to offend him.

The fateful meeting took place in October 1920 in the pharmacy of Landshut, which belonged to Gregor. As follows from Otto's notes, the meeting almost ended in a scandal due to significant disagreements between him and Hitler. Otto Strasser was much more influenced by General Ludendorff. "Ludendorff immediately made an impression on me; his massive face was complemented by a strong-willed chin with a dimple. A heavy look from under bushy brows had such an effect that I took off my hat. He was in civilian clothes, but to the tips of his nails he remained a general. It was felt that a gigantic will emanated from him."

Strasser described Hitler in a completely different way. In a blue suit, he seemed to him a very dubious type, who "as if lost in the shadow of the majestic hero of our army." In Hitler, Otto Strasser saw a 31-year-old man who breathed frequently, he would have been the same as many others, if not for the distorted grimace of hatred

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face. "A pale complexion spoke of a lack of physical exercise and a little stay in the escape air." Strasser did not find anything attractive in Hitler; on the contrary, his appearance repelled Otto.

The table talk was mainly about the results of the war and Otto's military exploits. The conflict with Hitler took place in the afternoon, when the discussion of the Kapp putsch began. Hitler declared: "I do not understand, Herr Strasser, how a former officer with such merit and with such a concept of honor could command the Red Hundreds under the burden of the Kapp rebellion." Strasser recalled that the situation began to heat up before his eyes. "If I were alone with Hitler, I could answer without any restraint. But here was General Ludendorff, whose role in the failed coup was not clear to me. At the hour when Erhardt's brigade victoriously entered

to Berlin, the general was on Unter den Linden!. Was he there as an unwitting observer? Or as a secret accomplice? I never knew this." Otto did not dare to openly express his own opinion, because he did not want to set against himself the former general of the Kaiser General Staff, whom he respected very much.

While Hitler vehemently defended the rebels who opposed the Versailles government, Strasser denounced them as reactionaries "connected with Tirpitz, Prussian reaction, with the Junkers, with heavy industry, with Thyssen and Krupp." Much to Hitler's displeasure, Liu

1 One of the boulevards in Berlin.

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Dendorf was also dissatisfied with the putsch, because the putsch did not receive support from the population. "At first it was necessary to win over the people to their side, and only then use force," the general said.

Slightly embarrassed, Hitler immediately changed the topic of conversation and began to talk about his party, using well-known theses. He proclaimed that he "craves to inflame the people with the idea of revenge", that this is necessary for victory in the coming war. The more cautious Otto spoke about the need to reorganize Germany, about the inevitability of social reforms, which had to be carried out as quickly as possible. Gregor supported his brother, emphasizing that nationalism should be taken from the right, and socialism from the left. At the same time, it was necessary to emasculate these concepts, ridding them of reactionary content, on the one hand, and a catastrophic orientation towards internationalism, on the other.

In his usual jocular manner, Otto Strasser made a remark about what seemed to him the most significant thing about the very idea of National Socialism. "The main emphasis in this combination should be placed on the weak "socialism". You call your program National Socialist in one word, don't you, Herr Hitler? German grammar established that with such a phrase, the first part is an epithet, a definition of the second, main part.

Hitler politely declined to answer, referring to the senseless sophistry used by Strasser. For tactical reasons, the future Fuhrer refused to further develop this topic, since in general he preferred never a priest

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give into predicaments. He ended the conversation with a long anti-Semitic monologue, after which the guests dispersed. When the brothers were left alone, Gregor asked about his brother's impressions. "I liked Lodendorff. He is not a genius, but a real man. As for Hitler, he was too servile to the general, too crafty in discussions and in the art of isolating the enemy. He has no political convictions, he only has the eloquence of a speaker," Otto replied.

When asked by Gregor whether he would join the National Socialist Party, Otto answered with an unequivocal refusal, citing his participation in the congress of the Independent Social Democratic Party. A few days before this meeting (October 12, 1920), Otto Strasser was present at the congress as a representative of the Dutch and Swiss press. It was there that G. Zinoviev delivered his famous seven-hour speech. After the congress, Otto interviewed a well-known Bolshevik. Even in the book "My Struggle" written 14 years later by Strasser (please do not confuse it with Hitler's work), one could feel the admiration the young student felt for the revolutionary and orator. This meeting bewitched Otto Strasser. Zinoviev told him about Bolshevik Russia, about Lenin, about the need to wage a struggle for socialism in Germany. Zinoviev tried in every possible way to convince the young journalist of the inevitability of a rapprochement between Russia and Germany.

At the end of October 1920, Otto Strasser was simply torn between various political ideas: revolutionary socialism, nationalism

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me, Christianity, anti-Semitism and the new pro-Soviet worldview. However, I did not find a single group in my country that could creatively rework and bring together such contradictory concepts. He even wanted to write down his understanding of Bolshevism. After returning to Berlin, Otto publishes in Möller van den Broek and Heinrich Gleichen! magazine "Conscience" a large article in which he talks about a meeting with Zinoviev. Moeller van den Broek was interested in the material, and he expressed a desire to get acquainted with its author. After their first meeting, Otto and Meller van den Broek met frequently and heatedly discussed various political issues, including the idea of National Socialism. Otto Strasser was one of the first to read Meller van den Broek's The Third Reich, which he had been working on in the early 1920s.

But so far politics has not attracted Otto Strasser. He decided to delve into science. In December 1920, Otto completed the writing of a scientific work, which he defended at the Julius-Maximilian University of Würzburg. The theme of the dissertation had nothing to do with politics, as it was devoted to the selection of sugar beets in Germany. Almost immediately after the defense, Otto Strasser received a lucrative offer from the Reich Ministry of Food Supply. He was offered to take the vacant position of referent. But the experience of communicating with the German bureaucracy discouraged Otto from any desire to work in government structures. He is no longer

1 Intellectual leaders of the Young Conservatives, one of the currents of the "Conservative Revolution".

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satisfied with the Weimar democracy, "6 which was dominated by internal unrest and endless routine, and officials were doomed to vegetate."

At the beginning of 1923, Otto Strasser met with Baron von Hertling, the nephew of the former Reich Chancellor, who had commanded his platoon during the war years. Hertling at that time was the director of the largest alcohol-producing concern, Hünlich-Winkelhausen. The former commander suggested that Otto not apply for a position in the ministry, but work at one of his enterprises. After a little practice, Strasser was first appointed director of the concern's branch in Saxony, then he became the right hand of the baron in Berlin. Otto was completely absorbed in his work and seemed to have lost all interest in politics. Strasser, like many Germans, was shocked by the news of the "beer putsch" organized by Hitler in Munich. Most of all, the young man was struck by the fact that among the arrested participants in the coup was his brother.

The first half of the 1920s was for Otto Strasser a time of awareness of his own positions and in-depth theoretical training. He tried to get acquainted with many well-known politicians, to find an ideological support for his world, in which both the conservative views and the socialist convictions of his youth were intertwined. He developed his own system of values, which greatly affected his then worldview of a merchant, by the way, the profession was very useful to him at the time. emigration to Canada. He simplified his conclusions to the limit, believing that he was a consistent supporter of Oswald Spengler.

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and Moeller van den Broek. We will talk about the influence of these personalities in the future, but for now we will only note that van den still had a decisive influence on Strasser's political views.

Brook. For Strasser, this ideologue has always remained "the prophet of the German Revolution and the brilliant visionary of the Third Reich."

In the meantime, another economic crisis broke out in the country, which hit primarily the middle and petty bourgeoisie. Strasser was well aware of the moods and hopes of these sections. In many ways, he shared their fears. In 1923, Otto was finally convinced of the correctness of his socialist and nationalist attitudes. The German people were threatened by the Versailles system, parliamentary democracy and capitalism, which not only caused an economic crisis, but also morally corrupted the Germans. He believed that in order to save Germany, it was necessary to unite the workers, peasants and soldiers who would fight under the banner of the "conservative revolution". Strasser understood this political current as an ideology that would be based on the principles of the Christian revolutionary national

socialism.

Chapter 2

THE ENTRY OF OTTO STRASSER INTO THE REVIVED NSDAP

After the failed putsch and the arrest of Adolf Hitler, many Germans naively believed that they would never hear about the Nazis again. Indeed, in Bavaria

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The former members of the NSDAP dissolved into numerous nationalist and paramilitarist organizations. In northern Germany, Hitler's supporters, together with the German People's Freedom Party, created the Greater German National Socialist Liberation Movement.

The German People's Freedom Party, the North German equivalent of the Nazi movement, was founded on December 16, 1922. It was an association of small nationalist "fölkisch"! - groups. The founders of the new organization were von Graefe, W. Hening, Erest Graf Raventlov, Artur Dinter and other anti-Semitic intellectuals. This party actually had no program. It was replaced by several slogans directed against the Versailles system, "infant parliamentarism", "Jewish domination and usurious capitalism". The members of this organization demanded the elimination of any exploitation of the working people, the liberation of the Germans from the ideas of Marxism, Bolshevism, class struggle and class thinking.

In 1923, Reinhardt Wulle tried to more clearly define the political goals of the German People's Freedom Party. He took as a basis the idea of a popular dictatorship, which was supposed to replace Weimar

1 "Völkische" is a mass "cultural-political" movement in Germany (literally translated from German as populism). From the second half of the nineteenth century. methodically adapted to the mass level, replicated and promoted the ideas of nationalism, pan-Germanism, geopolitics, anti-Semitism, social Darwinism and reactionary (feudal) romanticism. Achievements

"Völkisch" - both methodological and aesthetic-propaganda - were later almost completely integrated by Nazism.

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Republic of the German Federation. It was to be not just a new state, but essentially a new country - Germany, liberated from the Prussian spirit. Parliament was supposed to replace the senate, a class-professional structure. Social reforms were reduced to the reorganization of public education, the protection of the family, marriage, and the exclusion of Jews from public life.

In 1922-1923 the German People's Freedom Party was the largest fascist group in northern Germany. Thanks to active propaganda, she managed to annex such large organizations as the German Free Union (Brockhusen), the Greater German Workers' Party (Lindenhofen) and the German Social Union (Mosch). Very soon local organizations of the German People's Freedom Party appeared in Mecklenburg, Pomerania, East Prussia, Silesia, Thuringia, Saxony and Baden. Strong financial support from the Greater German Confederation and revolutionary passion attracted more and more supporters to this party. In 1923, a course was taken to seize power: with the tacit approval of the Reichswehr, the party began arming and training combat groups. The course towards armed struggle brought together the German People's Freedom Party and the NSDAP. It was decided to merge both structures. So the Nazis appeared in the north of the country.

This merging process was accelerated when, on March 23, 1923, the German government banned the activities of the German People's Freedom Party. Now the members of the banned party willingly passed under the leadership of Hitler. By this time, the whole country

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It turned out to be covered by a network of armed National Socialist groups. On November 9, during the Munich putsch, Albrecht von Graefe, the leader of the disappeared party, found himself in the ranks of the marching rebels next to Hitler.

In early 1924, after the NSDAP was banned, the remaining free supporters of Hitler and von Graefe decided to participate in the elections to the Reichstag, putting forward a single list of the National Socialist Freedom Party. Hitler, imprisoned in the Landsberg fortress, could not control the process of creating a new party structure. Meanwhile, in May 1924, the National Socialist Freedom Party received 1,918,000 votes (6.5%) in the elections, taking 32 seats in parliament.

On August 16, 1924, the congress of the new National Socialist Party was held. Von Graefe, Gregor Strasser and Ludendorff were chosen as its leaders. The latter had to move from Bavaria to Northern Germany, where the main forces of the party were based. But the stabilization of the economic situation dealt a powerful blow to the National Socialist movement, which had just begun to gain strength. Having entered the elections to the Reichstag in December 1924 as the National Socialist Liberation Movement, it received only 907,000 votes (3%) and 14 deputy mandates.

The movement split when Hitler was released from prison. On February 12, 1925, Gregor Strasser resigned from the leadership of the National Socialist Liberation Movement. Looking ahead, we can say that this grouping continued to exist until 1933, although

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ceased to play any role in the political life of the Weimar Republic.

While in prison, Hitler was skeptical about the activities of Gregor Strasser in the north of Germany. He even fell out with Ludendorff because he refused to support the reorganized movement. Knowing Gregor's oratorical and organizational abilities, Hitler seriously feared that he would compete with him. Fears were intensified for the reason that Strasser, as a member of the Reichstag, enjoyed not only parliamentary immunity, but could also travel around the country free of charge. Not wanting to lose precious time, Hitler organized February 24

1925 conference at which it was planned to recreate the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany.

As expected, Gregor Strasser did not support this initiative. Not only did he refuse to re-join the NSDAP, but he did his best not to mention his name in connection with the forthcoming conference. Hitler, who was forbidden to speak in northern Germany, had to persuade the stubborn Strasser - otherwise the activities of the NSDAP would have been limited only to Bavaria. Strasser agreed to compromise on only one condition: the National Socialist movement in the north of the country must maintain its political independence from Bavaria. Hitler had no choice but to give such a guarantee. Immediately after this deal, H. Strasser began to create new NSDAP groups, into which nationalists from the North German lands were drawn.

Already during the election campaign of 1924

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Gregor saw how difficult it was to adapt nationalist slogans to conditions in northern Germany. Hastily formed in 1920, the NSDAP program, better known as the 25 Points, was ill-suited to attract the middle strata and workers. Strasser himself was a good organizer, but by no means an ideologue. It was for this reason that he turned to his brother with a request to create a renewed and revised National Socialist ideology.

Otto Strasser enthusiastically accepted the offer to engage in political developments, since during his cooperation with Meller van den Broek was convinced that only the National Socialist idea could bring about the renewal of the country. He did not hesitate to join his brother when Hitler gave Gregor the right to independently make political decisions in the northern lands of Germany. For Otto, this condition was fundamental, since he was disgusted by the very idea of becoming dependent on Hitler, representing his interests.

The brothers immediately divided the sphere of activity among themselves. Otto became a "North German ideologist". He wrote articles and prepared speeches for his brother, in other words, he played the role of a "grey eminence", and therefore did not apply for any official posts in the party. As an ordinary member of the NSDAP, at that time he was not known to anyone, moreover, his influence was limited to the northern lands.

In his speeches, Gregor developed the thoughts expressed by his brother. In order to activate the groups under his control, Gregor implemented ideas that are very strong.
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given by Hitler in Bavaria "Führer-Principle". The senior party functionaries (Gauleiters, Kreisleiters) were appointed not by Hitler, but by Strasser himself. The leaders of the local groups were appointed in consultation with the Gauleiter council after they were recommended by the rank and file members of the party. This "democratism" was a thorn in the eye of Hitler, who quite rightly believed that it was an undermining of his authority, as well as a threat to the unity of the party.

On September 10, 1925, G. Strasser convened a party meeting in the Westphalian town of Hagen, which was supposed to develop a political line for the "northern" NSDAP. It had to take into account the special socio-economic conditions of the northern lands and be independent of the "Munich" program. The specifics of the north of the country had to be reflected in propaganda and agitation. After the creation of the "Workers' Association of the Northern and Western Gaus of the NSDAP", Strasser actually declared the right to an independent path of development.

From the very beginning, the debate at the meeting in Hagen revolved around the problem of socialism. The study of this political phenomenon was entrusted to a special committee led by the young functionary Joseph Goebbels. At that time he was head of the Nazi cell in Elberfeld in the north of the Rhineland.

Joseph Goebbels first encountered the National Socialists during the 1924 election campaign. Goebbels was introduced to them by his friend Karl Kaufmann, who was a member of the local party cell of the NSDAP. At one time, Karl fought in the ranks of the Erhardt brigade, and then, following his commander, he moved to the German-People's Schutzbund and

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organization "Consul" – associations responsible not only for anti-Semitic riots, but also for the murder of Rathenau!. It was Kaufmann who contributed to the establishment of a collegiate board in the Gau Elberfeld. In addition to himself and Goebbels, this body included the future head of the assault detachments, Viktor Lutze. When in September 1925 Gau Westphalia was separated from Gau North Rhine, Goebbels was immediately appointed head of the new party structure. Among the North German functionaries at that time, he was the most uncompromising supporter of socialism and pro-Soviet foreign policy. Later, Gregor Strasser, who became a clerk and editor of the newspaper National Socialist Letters, actively fought against such sentiments, calling them "maximalist demands on

rational socialism.

Such sentiments in the mid-1920s were called the "Elberfeld line", in fact becoming the first basis for left-wing National Socialism. Somewhat later, this line was supplemented by the theses of Otto Strasser published in the National Socialist Bulletin. The theses were sent throughout Northern Germany in order to promote the strength of ideological work and the strengthening of the North German party bloc. The theses themselves^{nyu} came out in a small circulation and were intended only for the leadership of the NSDAP.

The small circulation of the Strasser newspaper was predetermined by the fact that the brothers wanted to create an intellectually exacting organ, which

1 Walter Rathenau, German Foreign Minister, is assassinated by a group of young officers who believe that Rathenau was acting on behalf of the "wise men of Zion".

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would be fundamentally different from the Munich newspapers. In October 1925, Gregor Strasser described the goals of his newspaper as follows: "To provide a platform for the use of the fighting strength of the young

movement, which is the bearer of a new worldview. To give the lower Party leaders and orators the means of training and agitation, to give the means of struggle. .

By October 1925, the leaders of the left wing of the North German NSDAP were O. Strasser and J. Goebbels, who oriented the Gauleiters of the "working community" to break relations with Munich. A little more, and it resulted in an open clash between the left-wing National Socialists and the Nazis from Bavaria. Hitler was well informed about the left wing's attempts to develop its own ideology and create an organization independent of it. But in conditions of political isolation, when he could only speak in Bavaria, Hitler was reptile to show restraint and diplomatic flexibility. Meanwhile, at a party meeting in Hannover in November 1925, the left wing decided to go on the offensive.

Chapter 3

HANNOVER ASSEMBLY AND THE BAMBERG RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF NSDAP LEADERS

The meeting in Hannover took place at the home of the local Gauleiter Bernhardt Rust. It was attended by 24 people. Most of them have been configured

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hostile to Munich and Hitler. In addition to the Strassers, Goebbels, and Kaufmann, Rust, Hildebrand, and Kerr! also occupied openly left positions.

Hitler's only consistent supporter was Robert Ley, who later became head of the German Labor Front. It was he who invited Gottfried Feser, an observer from Munich, to the meeting. The reason for the meeting was the question of the return of the princely lands to their former owners. Hitler counted heavily on Ley, who had to persuade the left wing to support his intention.

Shortly before this, the deputies of the Reichstag from the communist and social democratic parties came out with a proposal to discuss a popular initiative on the gratuitous expropriation of the property of the royal and princely houses, which was to be transferred to the republic. This initiative was supported not only by left-wing organizations, which traditionally had a negative attitude towards the aristocracy, but also by wide circles of the middle strata, who watched with indignation as the princes received compensation, while the Weimar government refused to help petty rentiers who financed the military. loans.

In those days, Strasser wrote that the National Socialist Left considered immoral the idea that "the princes responsible for the massacre and its aftermath would receive back their castles, lands, and almost all hundreds of millions in gold." Strasser and Goebbels

1 After the Nazis came to power, B. Rust became the Minister of Education, and Hildebrand became the Gauleiter of Mecklenburg.

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once urged the public of Northern Germany to oppose such support of the nobility.

When rumors reached the north of the country that Hitler was flirting with the aristocracy, in particular maintaining close ties with the Duchess of Saxe-Anhalt, the demands of the Strassers became even more radical. Indeed, for tactical reasons, Hitler decided to get closer to the conservative and monarchical circles of Bavaria. He approved of the idea of compensating aristocratic houses. This decision by Hitler gave the left wing of the NSDAP the long-awaited pretext for the final separation from Munich. The "northerners" decided to remove Hitler from the leadership of the party and shift the center of gravity of party work to the north of the country.

After a heated discussion, during which Goebbels called Feather a spy, no decision was made. Most of the participants in the meeting decided that it was necessary to support the project of expropriating the possessions of the nobility. Before putting this question to the vote, Ley declared that such a draft decision was not competent, since it was not agreed with Hitler, "the only Fuhrer of the Party."

Trying to get away from discussing the main issue of the meeting, Ley fell into the trap prepared by Goebbels. After a brief announcement by Otto Strasser, Goebbels, in a voice trembling with excitement, demanded "the petty bourgeois Adolf Hitler be expelled from the National Socialist Party." Ley's lack of political acumen allowed the vague opposition of the left wing to develop into open resistance to Hitler's authority. Gregor

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Strasser, who was more associated with Hitler than any other functionary, refused to put this proposal to a vote. This issue was to be considered by some hypothetical party congress, which was supposed to decide the fate of the "pope from Munich".

Despite everything, Goebbels and Otto Strasser managed to win, as the left-wing National Socialists expressed their solidarity with the Marxists on the issue of expropriation of the princely property.

The left-wing intellectuals decided to consolidate their success and continued their offensive. Shortly before the meeting, in October 1925, they developed their own draft party program, which contained the main directions of activity of the "Working Community of the Northern and Western Gaus of the NSDAP" in the field of economy, administration and foreign policy. It was the first document that clearly shaped the political ideas of the National Socialist Left. The doctrine, in fact, existed unchanged until 1934. It received its main development in the movement created by Otto Strasser in 1930.

At the same time, the left wing of the NSDAP recognized the "25 points" adopted back in 1920. But in the official Nazi program, it put economic issues in the first place, which Hitler carefully avoided.

Otto Strasser spoke in favor of agrarian reform, which envisaged not only the restriction of private land ownership and the redistribution of land, but also the issuance of loans to peasants and their association in partnerships. In the industrial sector, he focused on the nationalization of the most important enterprises

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countries and transferring them under the control of a certain "people's community". The workers had to not only own the enterprise, but also participate in its management. In this way, Strasser wanted to solve the problem of the national integration of the proletariat. The National Socialist State, expressing the collective will, was to replace the professional chambers with a complex system of councils. Economic and political reforms should have been supplemented by a cultural program. In this direction, Otto was guided by the replacement of materialistic philosophy with "folk idealism" with a religious bias. In the field of foreign policy, Strasser of the Treaty of Versailles and Saint-Germain, Strasser demanded the restoration of united the ideas of Goebbels and Hitler's statements in Mein Kampf. Except cancellation Germany within the borders of 1914. Austria, the Sudetenland and even South Tyrol would join the new Reich. A new "mid-European" empire would begin rapprochement with Soviet Russia, Germany's preferred ally. Together, these countries were supposed to unleash a war of liberation against the Western powers.

In Hanover, the program prepared by Strasser did not receive unconditional support. Many of its points have been sharply criticized. Some of the Gauleiters considered its internal political part to be too liberal. Others disagreed with the idea of an alliance with Soviet Russia. In general, this document focused on the development of a specific concept of socialism, which was supposed to harmoniously complement Hitler's "25 points". Strasser recalled the will to reform

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Yam demonstrated the NSDAP in 1920-1921. He insisted on continuing such a revolutionary policy. But in this impulse, he was hampered by the figure of Hitler, who, with his understanding of the party program, increasingly clearly demonstrated a desire to get closer to the nationally oriented right-wing forces. At that time, Hitler was a "reformist" who wanted with all his might to regain legal political status. He was not going to put up with the activity of the left wing, which threatened the creation of himself and his party. The aggressiveness of the "northerners" could once again drive him into the "political ghetto". In addition, the left-wing National Socialists completely denied the idea that the Fuhrer was the key to the strength of the party. They refused to observe discipline and obey Hitler.

Hitler realized very quickly that something had to be done to prevent a split and break out again. forward. The collapse of the party could put an end to his political career. As a result, he called for a general meeting of the party leadership to be held on 14 February 1926 in Bamberg. Purely theoretically, all the leading cadres of the NSDAP should have taken part in it. But this event turned out to be the majority of Hitler's supporters. They were prudently brought to Bamberg in order to create a favorable atmosphere for the Führer at the meeting. The "southern" National Socialists supported Hitler, if only because they were engaged in the affairs of the party on a free basis, while the "northerners" had to earn their own bread. It is for this reason that so many Gauleiters from the left wing were never able to come to Bamberg. They

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Gregor Strasser and Joseph Goebbels were delegated there. These two arrived at the meeting, firmly convinced that they would be able to defend their theses. Their confidence was reckless - it turned out to be very difficult to do so. On February 6, Goebbels wrote in his diary: "We will be irresistible on Bamberg and lure Hitler to our field."

Hitler has already been told about the position of Goebbels and his activity, recommending that such a "dangerous agitator" be neutralized. Against all logic, Hitler decided to win him over to his side. In this way, he wanted to destroy the ideological unity of the "northerners". Hitler provided an impressive reception, demonstrating the mock friendly attitude of the Bavarian functionaries. During the conversation, the Fuhrer, as if inadvertently, made it clear that he would prefer to see Goebbels in his camp. Goebbels was amazed to the core, but still refused a hasty decision.

At the rally in Bamberg, Hitler's report on the political principles of the party was central. Some of the points Goebbels criticized very harshly. In his diary, he wrote in the evening of the same day: "Hitler was Gobor. Two hours. I was broken. Who is he? Reactionary? Shockingly indecent and unreliable. Russian Question: absolutely by. Italy and England are natural allies. Terrible! Our task is to crush Bolshevism. Bolshevism is a fucking trick! Reimbursement for princes! It should remain 6 strength. It did not address the issue of private property. Awesome!!!"

Hitler's speech was a response to the Hanoverian program, which was never discussed. This event

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showed that Goebbels could with great difficulty bring together the often contradictory points of a kind of political program developed by Otto Strasser. He could not clearly understand the two components of National Socialism.

Bamberg proved to be a setback for both factions of the National Socialists. The leftists were unable to consolidate their positions and direct the party along their own path, while Hitler was unable to achieve his recognition as a full-fledged leader. Goebbels assessed this episode as the collapse of National Socialism. "You have to be strong. Munich won a Pyrrhic victory. Work, be stronger, and then fight for socialism!" he wrote from his diaries.

But Goebbels's determination still shook. Hitler noticed this and in March 1926 invited him to his speech: in Munich. Goebbels arrived in Bavaria on 7 April. He immediately received an offer to hold a party meeting in the beer "Bürgerbräukeller", the "historical homeland" of National Socialism. The agitator from the north was in for a triumph. Hitler himself applauded him, calling him one of the most important members of the party.

After that, Goebbels took part in a mass demonstration, during which Hitler convincingly demonstrated his oratory skills. Goebbels, who finally changed his attitude towards the Führer, made a note in his diary entries: "He [Hitler] spoke brilliantly. I bow before the greatness of his political genius." At the end of April, after returning to Westphalia, Goebbels announced his unconditional support for Hitler's course. The unity of the left wing was broken. The positions of the "northerners" were weakened

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mi. Hitler, on the contrary, strengthened his position in the party, over which he almost lost control. Goebbels and Ley spent a month collecting information on the state of affairs in the party in the north of the country. They did not pay attention to the dissatisfaction of the Gauleiters, who called Goebbels a traitor. Now Hitler was ready to strike at the Strasser brothers. On May 22, 1926, he declared that the "25 points" were unchanged and there could be no question of developing a new or supplementing the old party program. Hitler thought for a long time how to eliminate G. Strasser, who could not agree with his sovereignty in the NSDAP. The time has come to carry out a series of organizational measures designed to impose the notorious "Führer principle" on the entire Party. Only in this way could Hitler concentrate all powers in his hands. Now the general leadership of the party was entrusted to the Munich central and its functionaries. The already hypothetical meetings and congresses of National Socialists, which had the right to make any decisions, ceased to exist. Those who were going to resist the orders from Munich were automatically expelled from the party. In order to organize loyal party structures on the ground, Hitler ordered the creation of a "Conciliation Council", which was supposed to resolve controversial issues, and in the north of the country to play the role of a conductor of Hitler's ideas. Hitler's positions were strengthened right before our eyes. Under these conditions, the left National Socialists began to feel very uncomfortable. May 23 G. Strasser met with the Führer. He suggested that he sell the pharmacy, move to Munich and become a party member.

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freelance functionary. Strasser flatly rejected such a prospect. He wanted to continue to devote himself to strengthening the left ("northern") wing of the NSDAP and to the publication of the National Socialist Letters, in which he planned to continue publishing his brother's articles. Less than a year later, the brothers were made to understand that the position that they expressed in their newspaper was just their private opinion.

The presence of their own newspaper could help the "northerners" in the fight against the "Bavarians", but the purchase of their own publishing house by the Strassers put them in a very difficult position. Gregor was forced to sell the pharmacy, and Otto began to earn his living as a journalist. But they believed: the game was worth the candle. The new publishing house was named "Kampf-Ferlat" ("Combat Publishing House").

For Berlin, the brothers decided to publish the Berlin Workers' Gazette, a weekly with a total circulation of 5,000 copies. The Saxon Observer was published in Saxony. It had a larger circulation - 50,000. But the most famous and authoritative newspaper of the "northerners" was the National Socialist, which had five large regional tabs. The publishing project of the left wing of the NSDAP was complemented by the theoretical journal Faus (Fist), which was printed in approximately the same circulation as the Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta. This was a significant advance, since in the beginning the National Socialist Letters, aimed at the northern Gaus of the Nazi Party, never went beyond a thousand copies.

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Now it is very difficult to establish what influence Kampf-Verlag had on the party as a whole. But one way or another, in the first years after the "beer putsch", when Hitler was little known in Germany, the newspapers of this particular publishing house became the most important means for spreading the ideas of left national socialism among the members of the NSDAP. At the organizational level, Kampf-Verlag did not officially fit into the structure of the NSDAP. It was a private project of the Strasser brothers (or, as Hitler liked to call them, the Strasser clique), whose employees were united by common left-nationalist ideas. And the left wing of the NSDAP itself after 1925 looked more like an ordinary political circle that tried to defend its own independence. In his instructions, Hitler liked to portray him as a close-knit organization that set out to destroy the party. Here he either went too far, or turned to the most common image of the enemy, deliberately overestimating his potential. Who was in this "circle"? There we could see Kaufmann, Koch, Stehr, Schapke, Groch, Dr. Krebs, Silesia's Gauleiter Rosikat, Count Reventlov and (paradoxically) Heinrich Himmler. They are all very famous National Socialists. But how heterogeneous the left wing was, at least this fact speaks - many of those listed later not only joined Hitler, but also made a good career during his reign. Take at least the same Himmler.

Despite tactical successes, Hitler was still unable to get rid of Gregor Strasser. In addition, he was afraid that many people would leave after him.

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some active and determined members of the Party. After Kampf-Verlag began to develop successfully and gain momentum, Hitler made another attempt to get closer to Gregor. In order to neutralize the old adversary, he suggested that Strasser first head the imperial leadership of propaganda, and then become the organizational leader of the party.

Gregor accepted this offer in the hope that he would be able to propagate socialist ideas more freely, and that Hitler himself would realize his mistakes and change his environment. He believed that constant contacts with Hitler could change his outlook. But it was all in vain - the NSDAP became more and more associated not with socialist ideas, but with reactionary pro-capitalist politics. Nevertheless, Gregor agreed to follow Hitler's orders, although Otto warned his brother: the cause of the conflict between the "northerners" and the "Bavarians" lies in a different understanding of the nature of national socialism. Gregor was adamant. He again decided to trust Hitler, as he already did in the early 1920s.

ANOTHER CROSSROADS: COOPERATION OR CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES?

By early 1927, it became clear that the Nazi Party was not a single entity. Hitler controlled the party apparatus, and the Strasser brothers

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ran their own publishing house, publishing many newspapers, through which they attracted people who sympathized with leftist views.

Skirmishes between representatives of these two ideological trends were at first played out on a purely theoretical level. But over time, disputes over issues of socialism, pro-Soviet orientation, anti-Semitism, anti-imperialism and the revolutionary line began to take on a more violent character. All this resulted in newspaper skirmishes. Hitler, who branded the Left as a "clique of Strassers," at a certain moment realized that it was impossible to isolate or discredit them. He had one alternative: either convince the left-wing National Socialists or expel them from the party.

And then came the finest hour of Joseph Goebbels. Knowing about his past popularity in the left circles, Hitler decided to use this little man in the fight against Otto Strasser.

The signal for active action against the Strasser brothers was the appointment of Goebbels to the post of Gauleiter of Berlin. Goebbels reported directly to Hitler, because he had at his disposal the entire party apparatus of the NSDAP. The main task is to block the work of Kampf Verlag. Otto Strasser was well aware of the danger Goebbels posed and the role Hitler assigned him in Berlin: "He was free to frustrate our plans at his own discretion. In addition, he had at his disposal the SA, which from now on received significant support from Hitler and was fully funded by him in the north-west of the country. After Goebbels strengthened the SA, he managed in the blink of an eye to create in Ber

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line, a branch of the party that had not been so long ago. Now he launched an active smear campaign in which he portrayed the Strasser brothers as "Landsknechts of capitalism who sold out to the Jews." But this tactic proved unsuccessful: such statements, hardly credible, raised quite a stir in the party.

As a result, Goebbels decided to act more subtly. He began to publish his own newspaper, which was supposed to compete with Strasser's Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta. The new edition, published on Munich money, was called "Angrif" ("Attack"). Almost all the money allocated for the Berlin branch went to its publication. Officially, Angrif was a private publication, while the Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta remained the official publication of the NSDAP. But Goebbels very cunningly used Hitler's support and his post as Gauleiter. It was in "Angrif" that he published all the official party information: dates and places of meetings and rallies, news about party everyday life. Goebbels flatly refused to cooperate with the editors of the Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta and to provide them with any information.

Such a maneuver led to the fact that the circulation of the Strasser edition soon fell. Gradually, the Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta turned from an official organ into a polemical factional leaflet. But this was not enough for Goebbels. In order to reduce street sales of Kampf-

Ferlag", he ordered stormtroopers to attack street vendors, attributing these antics to the antics of the communists.

But success in the fight against the newspapers of the Strassers did not

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did not mean victory over them. In order to draw the National Socialists away from them, Goebbels continued to develop his own socialist views. In fact, they were no different from Strasser's theses, with the exception that Goebbels was subordinate to Hitler. Back in Elberfeld, he set the task of winning the working class over to the side of the party. Now I've decided to make it happen. The first step was the creation of the National Socialist Production Cells (NSBO). He entrusted the leadership of the new party project to Reinhold Mukhov, a native of the left wing.

It was not only Goebbels who put spokes in the wheels of the Strassers. Accusations against them already rained down at the Weimar Party Congress, which was held on August 3, 1926. There it was decided that the "northern" socialist publications should be censored for compliance with the official party line. All this reduced the activity of Kampf Verlag. In opposition to the National Socialist Letters, the National Socialist Correspondence was established, which communicated Hitler's orders and directives to the Gauleiters and local party organizations. After that, the Fuhrer decided to deal with the inconvenient functionaries. In the shortest possible time, he removed the Gauleiters of Silesia (Rosikat), Pomerania (Phalen), Saxony (von Mücke) from their posts, replacing them with devoted people. They were followed by Gauleiters Kaufman and Koch.

By the beginning of 1927, the left-wing National Socialists went on the defensive. Now Otto Strasser defended his views with particular stubbornness, furiously

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attacking Hitler's policy of rapprochement with conservative circles. He already saw the direction in which the Führer was leading the party. When the rapprochement between the National Socialists and representatives of the German People's National Party began, Strasser loudly declared on all corners that Hitler had betrayed the ideals of socialism and turned over to the reactionaries. The main ideologue of the left National Socialism saw the way to create the Third Reich only in alliance with the Marxists, who realized the senselessness of the class struggle and proletarian internationalism. The final break between Otto Strasser and Hitler occurred when, in 1929, the question was raised about the possibility of the participation of the NSDAP in a bourgeois coalition government. Hitler decided to use his rapprochement with conservative circles in the fight against the left wing, which interfered with his struggle for power.

The world economic crisis of 1929 struck while Germany was still reeling from the shock of the 1923 inflation. The crisis has led to the fact that the political preferences of the middle strata have changed dramatically. Almost all parties, seeing growing unemployment, promised the return of order, tranquility and past well-being. The structural crisis, completely incomprehensible to many, required simple and uncomplicated explanations. Hitler, whom Strasser accurately described as the "seismograph of souls", finally got a great chance to take advantage of the consequences of the economic catastrophe. Now he decided to act on the political stage of the Weimar Republic as a serious partner with whom it was possible to

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give a government coalition. Hitler used the new tactics for the first time in the elections to the Landtag of Saxony, which took place on May 12, 1929. The NSDAP received five seats in the Landtag for them (before that, the Nazis had only two deputy mandates). Now the Hitlerite party could create a coalition state government in Saxony.

Hitler decided to insist on a coalition with the right-wing nationalists. For this idea, the "Saxon Observer" published by "Kampf Verlag" called him "a traitor to the idea of a revolutionary movement." It should be noted that the newspaper was very popular among the local National Socialists.

The local Gauleiter von Mücke, who headed the NSDAP faction in the Landtag, did not share the idea of a bourgeois coalition. He intended to create a government alliance with the communists and socialists. But the workers' parties, which did not get along very well with each other, rejected this proposal. Moreover, they brought von Mücke's idea to the attention of the general public. Thus, Hitler was given a very convenient pretext for getting rid of the left leadership of the party in Saxony. At the same time, a "paladin" from Munich could be put in place of von Mücke.

But still, Hitler decided to abandon the alliance with the conservatives, which could become the key to the formation of a state government in Saxony. This step did not at all mean a tactical victory for the left National Socialists, since Hitler decided to conclude a pact with the so-called pan-German nationalists. The left wing lost almost all its positions in Saxony, and Strasser could no longer control the situation in this German land. Co.

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When it became known that the Marxist parties, either individually or together, did not intend to create a united front with the left from the NSDAP, bitterness from the ideological defeat of the Strasserians! even more intensified. The National Socialist Left found itself between a rock and a hard place, between two hostile forces. On the one hand, there were communists and social democrats, on the other, conservatives, who rallied into a united nationalist front.

After this defeat, O. Strasser lost all potential allies, he no longer had a political alternative. He did not want to give up his positions, but he had no choice but to wait and practice senseless criticism of Hitler. In just a few days, he managed to quarrel with the Fuhrer for the second time. Again, the tactics of rapprochement between the NSDAP and the right-wing parties served as the reason for disagreement.

On December 8, 1929, in the elections to the Landtag of Thuringia, the Nazis experienced some success: they received 11% of the votes, that is, twice as many as in the previous elections. Having taken 6 out of 53 possible deputy seats, the National Socialists again became indispensable partners for creating a government coalition. From that moment on, the NSDAP began to play an important, if not a key, political role in Thuringia. The left wing was

1 Strasserians are meant exclusively supporters of O. Strasser, and therefore the mention of Strasserian newspapers refers only to those publications that were issued personally by O. Strasser and his followers. Speaking of Strasser's media, I mean the projects carried out by both brothers.

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only a few people, and therefore no one could prevent the creation of a bourgeois coalition. The Nazi W. Frick took the post of Minister of the Interior in the Thuringian state government. Hitler saw that the new tactics began to bear fruit - an alliance with conservatives and monarchists was to his advantage for the time being. When O. Strasser began to criticize this decision, it was regarded as a rebellion. The leftist rebel summarized his arguments in the article "Into the Heart of the State". It was published for the first time in July 1930, since December

In 1929 O. Strasser, submitting to party discipline, gave an oath promise not to oppose the coalition government in Thuringia. After Hitler read into the Heartland, he said: "Strasser is a fierce polemicist, but he must be got rid of." Strasser's criticism was dangerous because after the alliance with the conservatives, the rank-and-file members could get the impression that the NSDAP supported the Weimar Republic, and the "heroic renewal party" itself began to degenerate.

"So, as long as the current system exists and functions, the current deplorable state of the country will remain in the foreseeable future! Results can only be brought about by National Socialism, which is oriented towards a complete and decisive change in the system. But such a fundamental and radical change is possible only under the slogans of a national revolution and a final refusal to participate in governments... We must correct the policy of our party in one direction only: as in

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bring the collapse of the current system closer and make sure that this catastrophe does not linger," O. Strasser wrote in this article. It was she who became the first impetus to the Strasserian tactics of refusing to participate in any elections. Having proclaimed the slogans of the "policy of catastrophes" and the "German revolution", Strasser began to pursue a policy completely divorced from reality. Hitler, meanwhile, was bewitching the masses.

From the events that took place in Saxony and Thuringia, O. Strasser and his supporters learned only one lesson - Hitler will continue to fight against their "revolutionary platform". By not making their political ideas clear enough, they took a big risk. However, Strasser understood that "in order to fight against capitalism and its accomplices" the support of broad strata of the population was required. Therefore, in any industrial conflicts, the left National Socialists took the side of the trade unions. They believed that any strike, any strike dealt a blow to the Weimar Republic. Strasser himself was convinced that the revolutionary potential was preserved only among the left parties, and therefore they were simply indispensable for the implementation of the "national revolution".

When in April 1930 the workers of the heavy industry in Saxony went on strike, both Strasser and his press actively supported them. They were going to direct this action against the republic. By proclaiming a "revolutionary strike in the manner of the National Socialist struggle," the left wing hoped to prevent the NSDAP's amendment and to deprive Hitler of the support of the industrial magnates.

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Strasser hoped that after supporting the striking workers, the industrialists should sever any ties with Hitler.

Indeed, Hitler did not immediately take a clear position on this strike. The fact is that among the Saxon Nazis there were a very large number of workers who either participated in it themselves or extended a helping hand to the strikers. According to Strasser's memoirs, Hitler almost immediately received an ultimatum from industrialists: "Until the National Socialist Party and its , the Imperial Association of German Industrialists refuses financial support for the NSDAP. Most likely, this ultimatum was the product of Otto Strasser's wild imagination, but its content and mechanisms of influencing Hitler seem very plausible.

One way or another, Hitler gave the order to the Gauleiter of Saxony Muchmann, so that the members of the NSDAP stopped the strike. At the same time, O. Strasser insisted on its continuation. Neither Hitler nor Strasser wanted to retreat. Hitler involuntarily had to silence his recalcitrant rival. Otherwise, he risked losing rich financial aid, which was mainly used for Nazi propaganda. But Strasser could not abandon his position, otherwise he would have appeared in the eyes of his numerous supporters as a cowardly and cowardly politician. The gap between the two politicians has been going on for a long time. They stood on the brink of a political war.

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Chapter 5

THE LAST CONVERSATION OF HITLER AND O. STRASSER

The last meeting between Hitler and Otto Strasser took place in May 1930. It was organized by the Munich Party Chancellery. The Nazis hoped that they could buy Kampf-Verlag. Otto described this unexpected meeting as follows: "Among the methods that Hitler liked to resort to, a special role was played by the element of surprise. At a quarter to dba on May 21, 1930, when I was about to go to 6 Oranienburg, where our printing house was located, the telephone rang: "Hello! This is Rudolf Hess. Herr Hitler asks you to come to the Sanssussi Hotel for an urgent conversation. Hitler's visit to Berlin took place in the utmost secrecy. He did not want to surprise me in the 6th office, and therefore invited me to resolve the contradictions that had arisen." Despite some differences in the descriptions of this meeting, set out in Otto Strasser's numerous memoirs and pamphlets, they basically coincide. Strasser made shorthand notes for two days, which he then revised together in H. Blank. The fact that Munich did not dispute the fact of this meeting speaks more about the correct presentation of the course of the conversation!

Strasser seemed to be amazed at the time you

1 O. Strasser cited its full text in the pamphlet "Ministerial seats or revolution? A true account of my departure from the NSDAP, published in Berlin in 1930.

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abusive for a meeting. But the very fact of the appointed audience did not bother him at all. He had already received numerous hints of such a possibility. First of all, he was prompted by articles from Goebbels' Angrif. During the period from March to May 1930, four major articles appeared in this newspaper!, which actually set the stage for the appearance of Hitler in the German capital. All of them formulated accusations against Strasser, which were later voiced by the Fuhrer. These editorials, the content of which gradually shifted from political criticism to outright insults, were aimed at neutralizing the Berlin "dissidents". Goebbels unleashed the persecution of figures objectionable to Hitler in order for them to voluntarily leave the party. In his articles, he not only criticized Otto Strasser, but poured mud on him. He called the leader of the left National Socialists "a writer who is on the 6th search for an object on which he longs to vent his feuilleton rage." In addition, he was even denied an understanding of the very nature of the revolution. "It is not difficult for this pitiful loser," the article "Radicalism of the Writers," said, "to be radical, since his group has never, anywhere, been held responsible for its radicalism. And revolution for him is not a transitional stage, not a means to an end, but an end in itself. He would think about it, sitting at his desk, cut off from real possibilities. For Goebbels, Strasser's revolutionary activity was a "hyper-radical rampage" that

1 "Party" (03/30/1930), "Semi-Bolsheviks" (04/27/1930), "Meeting of Leaders" (05/04/1930), "Radicalism of Writers" (05/11/1930).

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only compromised the "good revolutionary name of the NSDAP." As a result, Goebbels called on the party to start a fight against "objective traitors", which was supposed to end with the expulsion of all supporters of "such a provocative line".

After reading these libels, Strasser had no doubts: they were sanctioned from Munich. Apparently, Hitler arrived in Berlin in order to "eliminate" the left opposition himself on the spot. Now one may wonder whether Strasser was really ready to break off relations with the Fuhrer? The fact that this decision was not taken for many years shows that Hitler did not dare to take such effective measures. On the other hand, Strasser himself hesitated, clearly overestimating his position in the party. He doubted the determination of Hitler, who began to put pressure on the banking and industrial circles.

During the meeting, Hitler stuck to his traditional tactics. He tried to liquidate Kampf-Verlag without aggravating relations with Strasser. An open conflict could spoil the intra-party atmosphere. Hitler had only one way - to buy Otto.

"Aman prepared a very enthusiastic report for me about your publishing house. I'm ready to buy it. Gregor, you and Hinkel will each receive 60,000 marks. In addition, you and Hinkel will become deputies of the Reichstag, "Hitler immediately declared."

1 René Sonderegger's pamphlet Death Center X provided other data. Otto Strasser was to receive 81,000 marks for the sale of the publishing house, the post of chairman of the NSDAP faction in the Reichstag and leadership of the party press with a monthly salary of 1200 marks.

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Had Strasser agreed to this proposal, he would have immediately become dependent on Munich. He would have been forced to observe party discipline both as an NSDAP functionary and as a member of the Reichstag. Gregor was already in a similar situation when he sold his pharmacy and began to obey directives from Munich.

Otto rejected an offer to sell his publishing house, making it clear to Hitler that he and his friends were refusing to support the Fuhrer's policies. Hitler's reaction was unequivocal: "The position of your newspapers is a public disgrace. Your articles violate the elementary laws of the discipline. This is an insult to the party program! My patience has run out. Kampf-Verlag, with your consent, must be liquidated. If we do not come to an agreement, I will be compelled to fight against you with all available means.

The gap between Hitler and the Strasserians became apparent in the first half hour of the conversation. A further seven-hour conversation and its continuation on the next day only clearly demonstrated the absence of any mutual understanding among the contracting parties. A lively debate began with Hitler's stormy criticism, which he brought down on Winfried Wendland's article "The New Philistinism." This publication appeared on 15 April 1930 in the National Socialist Letters. It was directed against the appointment of W. Frick as Minister of the Interior and Public Education in the Thuringian land government. These rearrangements led to the fact that Schultze-Naumburg was invited to the post of director of the Higher School of Arts in Weimar.

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Schultze-Naumburg, a 60-year-old art professor, has designed estates and mansions in the past. He enjoyed great prestige in nationalist and national socialist circles, as he called for a revival of German nationalism in the arts. His views on artistic creativity were a mixture of Renaissance and neoclassicism. In contrast, Wendland claimed that his work was influenced by the culture of the Middle Ages, the Baroque and the "expressionist revolution". Echoing him, Strasser wrote about the new director of the Higher School of Arts: "Schultze-Naumburg was an extravagant man who wore a long, curly beard. One of those ponderous and prehistoric Germans whom Hitler saw as the incarnation of the soul of our people."

So what annoyed Hitler in this article? The fact is that Wendland called Schultze Naumburg a "reactionary." For the Fuhrer, this attack was not just a matter of art, but a direct violation of party discipline. The Fuhrer not only did not like the soul in Schultz Naumburg, but was in full solidarity with his views on culture, which he was not going to discuss or question. For him, Schultze-Naumburg would have been a truly German creator who subtly felt the relationship between art and the Aryan race.

Hitler said: "The article published in the 6 National Socialist Letters was a treacherous blow to the back of V. Frick, our first National Socialist Minister. The Schultze-Naumburg invitation is a grandiose cultural

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event. Anyone who has even the slightest understanding of art understands that this person will teach true German art better than anyone else invited to this position. You, Herr Strasser, do not have the slightest idea about art... In reality, there is only the eternal Greco-Nordic art. There are no revolutions in art. There is no Italian or Dutch or German art; it is even absurd to talk about Gothic art. Everything that in general can lay claim to the name of art is only Greco-Nordic."

Strasser replied that culture arises in the organic unity of the interaction of different peoples. He cited as an example the Egyptian and Chinese cultures, which became the expression of the soul of the people. Hitler immediately transferred the discussion to his "territory". "Egyptian or Chinese art does not exist. Neither the Chinese nor the Egyptians were a single people. The bulk of them belonged to the lower races, 6 the burden as a berkushka was Nordic. It was she who was engaged in the creation of masterpieces," Hitler retorted.

The art debate ended after Strasser refused to discuss racial theory. With regard to this fundamental point, both National Socialist ideologists had completely different views on the racial question. Strasser refused to recognize racial theory as the only ideological component that would determine the official party ideology. But in this conversation, this moment was only

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only a prelude to the main question. Both protagonists wanted this from the very beginning of the meeting. It was necessary to discuss the role of the leader in the National Socialist movement.

Shortly before this historic meeting, one of Strasser's closest associates, Herbert Blank, wrote an article about devotion to the leader. In it, he spoke of respect for the leader, who was supposed to personify a certain idea. But he was to be trusted no more,

than the idea embodied in it, since the devotion of the individual must turn into fidelity to principles. Hitler took Blank's thesis as a personal insult: "His views of loyalty, which distinguish between a leader and an idea, really push the members of the party towards non-binding."

Strasser replied to this reproach: "Here there was no question of undermining your prestige. But still, I have always considered a characteristic feature of a German man, a Protestant by nature, the prevailing significance of an idea. The leader may fall ill, may seek to move away from the idea, 6 of which the starting point, goal and internal settings remain constant, and therefore God and his entourage are only servants of the idea. The idea is divine in nature, and we, people, are only a vessel, a body in which words are put. Strasser adhered to an individualistic assessment of the rightness of the leader, which was based on the concept of conscience. For Hitler, the existence of a critical assessment of his activities was tantamount to the absence of any discipline. For him, this was unacceptable, as it contradicted the very essence of

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This party, based on the power of a charismatic leader, who had to command not only the deeds, but also the thoughts of his party members: "What you say can lead to the collapse of our organization, which is based on strict discipline. I have no desire to see some deranged writer destroy this structure. You are a former officer, but you should see that your brother obeys my discipline, even when he does not agree with me.

Almost immediately, Hitler delivered an ultimatum: Kampf-Verlag would be declared an enterprise hostile to our party. I will forbid every member of the party to cooperate with your newspapers, and I will expel the bass and your group from the NSDAP.

The situation escalated. Strasser had no choice but to attack Hitler on the main issue - the understanding of socialism. Hitler's answer was to be for him "the last proof of the betrayal of the spirit of National Socialism."

"The reasons why you are going to destroy Kampf-Verlag seem to me to be just a pretext. The true motive for your actions is the desire to strangle our revolutionary socialism in the interests of obtaining a legal status for the party and further cooperation with the bourgeois right-wing parties, which, by the way, you deny," Strasser added fuel to the fire.

Hitler evaded a direct response to the criticism that had been voiced and spoke of the racial content of National Socialism: "The masses want nothing but bread and circuses. They do not understand anything in some ideals. We will never see the masses

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CI files will be imbued with them. We need only selection: the people from whom the new stratum of masters will be formed do not have morality and compassion. This ruling stratum must know that it commands by right, if only because it belongs to the highest authority. He must resolutely and ruthlessly defend this right. Only the Nordic race has the right to blast in the world, and this must become the cornerstone of our foreign policy."

In addition, Hitler condemned the policy of rapprochement with the USSR proclaimed in the "National Socialist Letters": "Any alliance with Russia is impossible, since the Jebrey head rules the Slavo-Tatar body there."

The discussion continued the next day. But on May 22, the conversation was no longer tete-a-tete, but in the presence of several people. Among them were Rudolf Hess, editor of the Völkische Beobachter (People's Observer) Aman, publisher who began to adhere to Hitler's positions

"National Socialist Letters" Hinkel and Gregor Strasser, who played a silent role in this tragedy.

Otto Strasser's tactics were limited to what he wanted to prove: Hitler was not a socialist. He made it clear that Hitler's maxims were contrary to revolutionary National Socialism: "All right, Herr Hitler, the questions I would like to ask you are as follows. Would you be convinced, like me, that our revolution in the spheres of politics, economics, and culture must be of a total character? Are you planning a revolution that will fight internationalism with equal force?"

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real Marxism and bourgeois capitalism? For the sake of establishing German socialism, would you like our propaganda to attack some as well as others?

Then Otto outlined the content of his own program as it was formulated in Gannover. Hitler's answer put an end to Strasser's last hope that Hitler was a socialist. He exclaimed: "This is pure Marxism! This is almost Bolshevism! You want to extend democratic principles to the sphere of economy. Democracy is already responsible for the ruins we are forced to live in." Hitler began throwing abrupt phrases in Strasser's face that the capitalist system did not exist at all, that autarky was pure madness, that the Nordic race organized trade in Europe on the basis of barter, that nationalization and socialization were dilettantism, to say the least, pain. - . shevism.

To Strasser's question: "Let's say, Herr Hitler, tomorrow you will come to power. What will you do with Krupp? Will you leave his enterprises intact?" Hitler gave a quite unambiguous answer: "It goes without saying, yes! Do you think I'm so crazy as to destroy heavy German industry? Our national socialist state, like the fascist one, will protect the interests of both workers and employers, acting as an arbiter if necessary, regulating conflicts. In the economic sphere there is only one system: responsibility at the top, authority at the bottom... This is the point on which our views are diamete

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diverge radically. Participation of workers in profits and enterprise management is a postulate of Marxism. I believe that this influence can only be exerted by the upper strata, which govern the state."

With these words, Hitler interrupted the discussion, referring to the fact that he had other meetings planned. And although the conflict was not settled on the evening of May 22, the utmost clarity was introduced into the relationship between these politicians. Hitler wanted to get rid of the younger Strasser as quickly as possible. He entrusted this mission to Goebbels, who interfered in every possible way with the activities of Kampf-Verlag in Berlin.

Otto Strasser was left alone. He was supported by only a few associates. Gregor Strasser and Hans Hinkel, originally part of the left wing, hesitated to support Otto. However, they did not share Hitler's ideas, which he expressed during the May conversation. Between May 22 and July 4, the day when the final rupture of relations between Strasser and Hitler took place, the Fuhrer transferred part of his unlimited powers to Goebbels, so that he would legally squeeze the "Bolshevik writer" out of the party and put an end to the opposition that had already existed for five years. years.

Hitler, on the advice of Goebbels, did not immediately break off relations with the leader of the left-wing National Socialists. But his silence, which lasted almost a month and a half, did not

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was a sign of indecision. He was going to deal with the Strasserians after the elections to the Landtag of Saxony. Hitler was afraid that the press might sniff out the fundamental differences within the NSDAP. This could lead to the fact that the ideas of Strasser's Bolshevism would undermine the potential of the bourgeois bloc, and the left national revolutionary cadres would take key positions in the Saxon SA. Strasser could not figure out such a combination and wasted time pointlessly creating a new organization, mainly consisting of people who had left the NSDAP. He just as fiercely continued the polemic with Munich. In the National Socialist Letters, Strasser reprinted an article that was a response to Goebbels' attacks. It was called "Literators" and was originally published in the National Socialist newspaper "The Coming". In it, Strasser's colleague Wolf Larsen analyzed the reasons for the contemptuous attitude towards writers, which was often found among Nazi bosses. He considered it strange that "refined, inspired people were loudly given dry orders." "The enlightened writers saw the delusions of those who understood the "German Revolution" as a task, a duty and a specific event. After all, it has long been established that whenever world history was preparing a revolution, writers half a century before set out the dynamics of the burden on paper. The French Revolution broke out when the ideas of the Encyclopedists undermined the old society and the bourgeoisie became imbued with new demands for burdens. Rousseau and Voltaire became the counterparts of Robespierre and Danton. The fathers of the Russian revolution are not only

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bombs were fired, but for almost decades 6 Swiss emigration argued and gave birth to leaflet after leaflet. Is it a coincidence that the Russian revolution, as well as the fascist one, was led by publicists Lenin and Mussolini? The German Revolution, as the spiritual upheaval of our century, appeals to the works of Arthur Möller van den Bruck, Oswald Spengler, Wining, Ernst Junger and many others, including the martyrs of Munich and Berlin." Having accepted the rules of the game imposed by Hitler, the National Socialist Letters in the period from June 15 to 30 were puzzled only by how to respond in a timely manner to Goebbels' attacks. In order to illustrate the differences between the two party factions, Strasser chose the following themes: socialism, the forced continuation of the revolution, the concept of Europe and the organic idea of the people, and, of course, the teachings of Oswald Spengler, whom the National Socialist left regarded as the prophet of the German revolution. By focusing on these stories, Strasser wanted to show the entire party that Kampf-Verlag was not going to be disciplined and follow Hitler's orders without a murmur. On June 22, 1930, the day of the elections of the Saxon Landtag, Goebbels justified Hitler's decision to go to the elections in alliance with the conservative nationalist parties: "What does a compromise give? I will say: there is another way that will bring us to power. But I'm not saying that the collapse of the system is inevitable, and we just have to sit and wait for it to happen. First, this system 6 eventually found a way out of previous crises; secondly, the burden itself also changes, stabilizing

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a cross on a path suggested by an abstruse paper-marker who would think it over at his desk; thirdly, the laws of social development are still at least not as convincing as mathematical formulas; fourthly, the last reserves of resistance, on which the party opposition stakes, will wither and be exhausted by the time of the decisive battle; 6-fifth, the enemy, the battle with which is our first priority, is only one - Bolshevism. Either National Socialism wins power, or our future is sealed. Under these conditions, only stupid writers are ready to back down.

On June 22, in Saxony, the NSDAP was waiting for a political triumph - the Nazi party gained three times more votes than in the 1929 elections. This victory strengthened Hitler in the idea that it was necessary to come to power by legal means. But such a path presupposed the end of the opposition activities of the Nazis.

On June 30, Hitler informed Goebbels of this in a letter. In it, he demanded "a ruthless purge of the Party". "Dear Dr. Goebbels," it said, "200 years ago I put bass on the most difficult site, 6 in the hope that your activity and your energy will help create a single, cohesive organization. You deserve the highest praise, as you brilliantly coped with this task ... I ordered the imperial educational commission to help you in every possible way on this front of work ... the personal headquarters of the Fuhrer, all the forces of the SA and SS, all members of the party. These forces must be

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shens against a dozen professional slanderers and writers.

When this letter appeared in the newspapers, the campaign against Strasser's supporters was in full swing. Its first victim was Eugen Mossakovsky, founder and publisher of one of the Nazi newspapers, an expert on the "Russian question", one of the oldest employees of Kampf Verlag. The fact is that in June 1930, the consideration of the criminal case on insulting the Imperial President Hindenburg was completed. This trial made Mossakovsky a personal enemy of Goebbels. At one time, Goebbels inadvertently stated that until 1925 he believed Hindenburg and was even his admirer. In support of this, he told an absolutely incredible story. In 1923, during the Ruhr crisis, when Franco-Belgian troops occupied this German region, he, Goebbels, was allegedly arrested by the Belgians. During his imprisonment, he was subjected to torture and was whipped. The reason for the arrest and torture allegedly was the call of the future Berlin Gauleiter to turn to Hindenburg.

At the trial, Goebbels also added that in 1925 he fell into the camp of Hindenburg's opponents, since the Reich President recognized himself as responsible for the adoption of the Weimar Constitution. This frank lie - Goebbels was perceived very painfully in the ranks of the nationalists. In their opinion, it tarnished the bright names of the real heroes of the anti-French resistance. They attributed to those, first of all, Leo Schlyager, who was shot by the occupiers.

At the end of June 1930, Mossakovsky at a meeting of the leadership of the party organization in Berlin

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Brandenburg attacked Goebbels with sharp criticism for his irresponsible inventions. He decided to bring to light a few old little-known stories in order to operate with facts, to show how lied Goebbels was. In one of these stories, Goebbels changed the date of his entry into the NSDAP to an earlier one. Thus, he wanted to get into the ranks of the "old party guard". In fact, he ended up in the NSDAP not in the early 1920s, but only in 1926. Goebbels immediately realized the danger that threatened him. Had these facts been brought before the disciplinary commission, he would have been publicly convicted of lying. In turn, this could undermine his credibility in the ranks of the Berlin SA. Among the attack aircraft, the Berlin Gauleiter was known as "a fighter as hard as steel."

Hitler ordered no investigation into the facts that Mossakowski could discover. He himself was expelled from the NSDAP "for anti-party activity" without explanation of any reasons. Before the "trial of honor", Mossakovsky tried to explain that he was not at all against Hitler or the ideas of National Socialism, but only against the slanderous Berlin Gauleiter and some of his henchmen. But all the members of the court were unanimous - they had already been instructed by Hitler and Goebbels. Mossakowski, as an exception, was given the opportunity to leave the ranks of the party himself. On this occasion, in the party newspaper Völkische

beobachter wrote only that a political party should not turn into a debating club. "The main task of every member of the NSDAP is to follow the clear line of the National Socialist movement."

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In mid-June 1930, the conflict between Hitler and the Strasser faction ceased to be the lot of the top of the party. Now he has touched the ordinary party members from Berlin. The Disciplinary Commission strictly forbade local NSDAP groups from receiving the newsletter of the "National Socialists". The ban applied even to simple communication with distributors of Strasserian newspapers.

In June, Hitler could record another victory to his credit: he managed to expel the editor of the Saxon Observer, Richard Schapke, from the party. The reason for this was an article published on June 23, 1930. In it, Schapke criticized the anti-Marxist government coalition in Saxony and called on the people to revolution against the reactionary conservative forces: "If the conservative parties openly admit themselves responsible for the policy of implementing the Young Plan, which plunged the people into poverty, poverty and unemployment, then the time has come for the Germans to understand who their enemy is. It's time to settle accounts with them."

Two days after this publication, on June 25, 1930, the telephone rang in the editorial office of the Saxon Observer. Dr. Bennecke, a deputy elected from Dresden and known for his left-wing sympathies, wanted to talk to Schapke. Bennecke, who learned about the forthcoming "trial", demanded that Schapke declare that Bennecke himself was the author of the article. The newspaper printed it because he was a deputy elected on the party list. But Schapke understood that this move would not be able to resolve the conflict that had developed in the NSDAP. On the same day he appeared before the Berlin discipline

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linear commission in order to be expelled from the party. The Commission did not even confer before reaching a decision: "The misdemeanor is identified as an undertaking by the 'National Socialists' and Otto Strasser, who declared that Dr. Frick's invitation to the Thuringian government was an 'unsuccessful experiment'." Regarding the political analysis of the elections held in Saxony, the accused stated that, despite the fact that he did not belong to the "National Socialists", his article "And what from now?", published 6 in the Saxon Observer, supports their views both in form and in content. The verdict was predictable - "anti-Party activity."

Following Schapke, four more supporters of Otto Strasser were expelled from the party under the same "article": Fritz Hermann, Horst Wafer, Alfred Reschke and Wilhelm Korn. It is noteworthy that all of them joined the NSDAP in 1928-1929, that is, in fact, on the eve of their "exile". Following them came the turn of Otto Strasser himself.

To deal with the objectionable, Tebbels decided to organize a general meeting of members of the Berlin party organization. The most prominent members of the disciplinary commission were scheduled to speak at it: Hermann Göring, Hans Hinckel and General von Epp. Otto Strasser, together with Major Buchruker and Wilyslm Korn, decided to use this event for their own purposes. The representatives of the left wing decided to state their political position. When they arrived at the Berlin Sports Palace, they were expelled from there by stormtroopers. Passage to the meeting they were strict

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It is prohibited, since they were not listed in the Berlin party organization (Strasser and most of his supporters were members of Gau Brandenburg).

In the hall, Goebbels unleashed a sophisticated stream of abuse on the "writers". They were to "smash their heads with the iron hammer of discipline." After Hitler's notorious letter was read, in which he called for a "ruthless purge of the party", Goebbels called on all those who disagreed with this to stand up and leave the hall. Later, "Angrif" mentioned three of the five thousand participants who took to the streets. The number of supporters was obviously underestimated, since at that time there were about 400 revolutionary National Socialists in Berlin.

On July 1, 1930, a radio message from the Reich Propaganda Leadership was circulated in Berlin stating that "an insignificant number of saboteurs" would be expelled from the party in the near future. Otto Strasser and his supporters did not know how to react to such an attack. By this time, Gregor Strasser had withdrawn his people from Kampf Verlag, and the Saxon organization had been purged of leftist cadres. Under these conditions, Otto Strasser could not count on either the help of Count Reventlov or the support of Gauleiters Koch and Hildebrand.

On July 1, Wilhelm Korn, already expelled from the NSDAP, wrote in one of Strasser's newspapers, the National Socialist, that he was going to fight against "the persecution of the socialists and the fascist violence of the people of Goebbels." An article by GR was published in the same issue of the newspaper. Cap, in which he lashed out at Goebbels, "who used

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used his influence to persecute true socialists." With the consent of the editorial board of the newspaper, Shapke in his material again returned to the article, which, in fact, led to his expulsion from the party. In it, he, like most Strasserians, ruthlessly criticized the NSDAP alliance with conservative paramilitary groups: The Steel Helmet is waging a one-sided struggle against international Marxism. He united with the reaction and the big bourgeoisie. That is why the "Steel Helmet" will never be able to become a truly national socialist fighting partnership.

But Strasser, and Schapke, and Korn, continuing to adhere to their radical views, attacked not Hitler, but only Goebbels. The phrase that the publication of Hitler's letter greatly astonished the revolutionary National Socialists shows Strasser's intention to make peace with Munich. He attributed to Hitler the role of the highest authority, which was supposed to open to the young politician the doors that had hitherto been closed to him.

To put an end to the protracted conflict, on July 2, Goebbels convened a general meeting of functionaries. In his memoirs Hitler and I, Strasser wrote that it was he who initiated this meeting. Such a statement seems not only improbable, but absolutely fantastic. Strasser described the events of that day as follows: "However, when on the evening of July 2 I was about to enter the 6th building where this meeting was held, an SS officer, behind whom there were 5 more people, informed me that I could not get through 8 Hall, as I do not live in Berlin. Formally, he was right, such meetings could attend

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only residents of a certain Gau Party. Meanwhile, I continued to insist on my presence, since the meeting was scheduled at my request. The SS officer remained adamant. Meanwhile, the debate began. The building was surrounded by SS men. Goebbels, in his favorite style, tried to justify Shapke's exclusion from the party. My best friend, Major Bukhrucker, asked for the floor.

"I'm sorry, but I can't give you a word, because a party investigation has been launched against you. nie".

"Against me? exclaimed Buhruker in astonishment. "I don't know anything about it."

"You will receive a written confirmation of this at home in the evening. It has been mailed."

A similar comedy was repeated when Herbert Blank tried to speak. Immediately out of the presence of thousands of people, 117 got up and left the hall in protest. I continued to stand outside. My friends told about this incident in 6 colors. We immediately went to the house of Blank and Buhruker, but we did not find any written persuasion there.

In the evening of the same day, Otto Strasser met with Gregor. Otto wanted to discuss the situation in the NSDAP. It was there that he first spoke about his possible withdrawal from the party:

"Gregor, since Hitler does not dare to fight with me, I myself decided to do it. Tomorrow I will leave the party." "Good," he replied. Gregor, but I must stay.

On July 3, Otto Strasser sent a telegram to Hitler, which in its style was more like an ultimatum.

"Herr Goebbels expelled a number of

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my comrades. Yesterday, under a fake pretext, I deprived my other friends of the word. If such antics are not stopped within 24 hours, consider that my friends and I will sever relations with the party.

Strasser went for broke. He never received an answer. He had no choice but to finally break off relations with Hitler. On July 4, 1930, Otto Strasser left the ranks of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany.

At this point, it is simply necessary to make a few remarks. Firstly, from such a step, Hitler gained much more than Otto Strasser. Since the elections in Saxony, Hitler had been pushing for Strasser's withdrawal from the party, which compromised him "with his Bolshevik ideas." At a critical moment, Goebbels did all the dirty work for the Fuhrer. And in the end, all responsibility for leaving the party was shifted to Otto Strasser himself.

Secondly, Otto's indecision only played into Hitler's hands. The factionist Strasser acted according to a script that had been written in Munich. Therefore, on July 4, all (!!!) party newspapers reported the departure of Otto Strasser. It seemed like they were just waiting for this moment.

Numerous articles, notes, reports emphasized that he, Strasser, could no longer count on political support, having lost any prospects. Indeed, Strasser could achieve his goal only by being in the political circle of Hitler. But he was a master of the political game. Now he could start to fight the objectionable politician with other methods.

Part 1!

"BATTLE COMMONWEALTH OF REVOLUTIONARY NATIONAL SOCIALISTS"

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Chapter 1

THE CREATION OF A "BATTLE COMMONWEALTH OF REVOLUTIONARY NATIONAL SOCIALISTS"

On July 4, 1930, the day Otto Strasser left the Nazi Party, leaflets appeared on the walls of many cities in Northern Germany, which were entitled "Socialists leave the NSDAP". This document clearly stated the main theses of the left National Socialists. It ended with a call for solidarity of all "true socialists" remaining in the NSDAP. Let's take a closer look at this leaflet. What did it say?

"In numerous issues of foreign and domestic policy, primarily economics, the NSDAP took an attitude that is very difficult to explain with the help of the "25 points", in which we only

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general outlines of the party program. Under the conditions of the catastrophic bourgeoisization of the party, the predominance of tactical considerations over the fundamental strategic moments, the terrifying bureaucratization of the party, when the apparatus becomes an end in itself of the movement, and the interests of this apparatus are placed above program requirements and ideas, it becomes impossible to discern the general contours of the idea. We perceived and continue to perceive National Socialism as a consciously anti-imperialist movement. It limits nationalism to the necessity of preserving and prospering the German people, who must not be dominated by other nations and countries.

As socialists, the authors of the leaflet intended to fight against "international capitalism. and Western imperialism", condemned the intervention against Russia and supported "the struggle of the Indian people for their freedom from British colonial rule". The appeal emphasized that the Munich leadership, on the contrary, saw potential European allies in the Entente countries.

As one of the main goals, the revolutionary National Socialists set "the creation of a great people's Germany", where both an organic corporate state and an anti-democratic republic that rejected monarchist and fascist government reforms were to merge.

National Socialism, according to the authors of the leaflet, as "the great antithesis of international capitalism" had to be formed thanks to the socialist idea of generalization, long put forward by Marxism.

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the collapse of the economy. He had to destroy any domination of capital over the man of labor. This socialism assumed "providing all the working people of one nation with property; management and participation in profits from economic activities". This was supposed to be achieved only through the elimination of monopolies, which were associated exclusively with the names of their owners.

The struggle on two fronts, "against the capitalist bourgeoisie and international Marxism, demanded in the sphere of economy and culture a resolute rejection of liberal rationalism." This complex confrontation should not, as in the case of Adolf Hitler, lead to unnatural alliances. Under no circumstances should anti-Marxism be given a pre-eminent position. For the revolutionary National Socialists, the social demands of the peasants and workers were not at all a communist threat.

Naturally, Otto Strasser was behind this leaflet. He watched with increasing suspicion the NSDAP's alliance with Hugenberg and the German People's National Party. The leader of the left National Socialists rejected any policy of coalitions and compromises, since

"any coalition has always led only to the preservation of the existing system, the system of national lawlessness and capitalist exploitation." As an example of such a selling policy, the Strasser group again cited the results of the elections in Thuringia.

Strasser interpreted Hitler's desire to win a tactical victory as a rejection of the fundamental views of National Socialism. For Otto it

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was proof of the bourgeoisie and bureaucratization of the top of the party and the storm troopers. This unfortunate trend arose from the general thirst for enrichment. It led to endless squabbles, which, naturally, reduced the viability of the party.

Strasser stated in his leaflet that for almost five years he had been trying to fight against such errors and misconceptions. "But since the party leadership did not abandon the 25 Points, we hoped that the revolutionary spirit that lives in the majority of storm troopers and youth will defeat the philistinism of the overgrown leadership," the appeal said. Adolf Hitler's letter, which ordered the expulsion of all known revolutionary party members, was for Otto another confirmation that the return of the revolutionary spirit to the bowels of the NSDAP was impossible. As a result, the "National Socialists" decided to fight for the German Revolution, leaving the Hitlerite Party. They resolutely opposed "any substitution of the revolutionary character, socialist will and nationalist principles

true National Socialism.

The appeal, which saw the light of July 4, 1930, was signed by Otto Strasser and his 25 supporters, who mainly worked in Kampf-Verlag. Among the signatories we can see Alfred Reschke, Eugen Mossakowski, Wilhelm Korn and Herbert Blank already familiar to us. These people are still pre-. it was necessary to play a significant role in the formation of revolutionary National Socialism, and therefore we will dwell on their personalities in more detail.

Eugen Mossakowski always adhered to the ideas of a radical social upheaval and creation

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new social order. From 1926 he was an active member of the so-called "Old Socialist Party". This movement was created in the autumn of 1925 by 23 deputies of the Saxon Landtag. All of them were right-wing socialists and set as their main goal the revival of the national spirit in the working class. Everyone denied the need for a class struggle and had an extremely negative attitude towards the international solidarity of working people. The chief editor of the official print organ of the "Old Socialists" "People's Cause" was the well-known national revolutionary Ernst Nikisch. They had a long-standing friendship with Mossakovsky, although this did not rule out certain ideological differences.

The ideological guidelines of the "Old Socialist Party" brought this organization closer to such paramilitarist associations as the "Oberland Union" and the "Union of Front-line Soldiers". The latter was headed by the popular publisher Lehmann. It was in his newspaper The Third Reich that Mossakovsky became acquainted with the ideas of Moeller van den Broek. Revolutionary conservatism bewitched Mossakowski.

In 1928 he met Gregor Strasser. Having fallen under the spell of the left-wing National Socialists, Mossakovsky not only became an employee of Kampf-Verlag, but even joined the NSDAP on March 1, 1929. Mossakovsky was an excellent journalist who visited the Soviet Union more than once. This predetermined that he almost immediately became the editor of one of the newspapers of the left. National Socialists.

As mentioned above, Mossakowski was friendly with Gregor Strasser and Ernst Nikisch. It was he who had the idea to introduce

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these two politicians. Mossakowski hoped that E. Nikisch would become a member of the NSDAP and cooperate with the Völkische Beobachter. When relations between the Strasser brothers began to deteriorate in the 1930s, Mossakowski tried to bring Nikisch closer to Otto Strasser. Being convinced that the coming national revolution was to destroy the old social order, Mossakowski was considered in the NSDAP as a leftist, ready to support any undertakings directed against the ruling system. He did not care who expressed such ideas - the National Socialists, the Communists, the Social Democrats. He openly supported some of Lenin's ideas, believing that Bolshevism was a positive experience from which true National Socialism should have learned certain lessons.

As an expert on the Russian question, Mossakovsky was an intermediary between the left National Socialists and the National Revolutionary organizations.

Wilhelm Korn, another signer of the Revolutionary National Socialist Appeal, joined the NSDAP quite late, on July 1, 1929. Despite this, he quickly began to climb the party ladder. Thanks to his officer background, he was appointed head of the National Socialist Personnel School in Brandenburg. It was there that he met Beppo Remmer. Remmer, a lawyer by education, rose to the rank of captain during the World War and had the highest awards. At one time he was a member of the notorious Thule Society, and in 1919 he became one of

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organizers of the volunteer corps "Oberland". He actively participated in the defeat of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, after which he left for the eastern borders of Germany. In 1921, he changed his views on life and established contacts with the communists, and in June 1921 he refused to provide his combat group for reprisal against the striking workers. In 1923 he was the organizer of mass sabotage in the Ruhr, occupied by the French. He was arrested in 1926 for ties with the communists. After his release, he joined the Union of Anti-Fascist Action. In 1932, he created the Aufbruch-Kreis (Breakthrough Circle), a militant organization close to the Communist Party of Germany.

In Remmer's national Bolshevik ideas, Korn found confirmation of his national revolutionary convictions. However, until 1930, Wilhelm Korn did not even think of leaving the NSDAP and starting to cooperate with the communists.

Major Ernst Buhruker was born on January 5, 1878. He received a classical military education. After the war, he became one of the officers who created the so-called "black Reichswehr". He dreamed of destroying the Weimar Republic and creating a military state that would wash away the "shame of Versailles" and revive Germany as a superpower. Buhruker was an ardent nationalist and militarist who dreamed of putting into practice new strategic developments in the use of military equipment and military air assets. He had a negative attitude towards possible cooperation with the communists, leaning towards the need for cooperation between the National Socialist Left and the nationalist paramilitaries.

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mi organizations. In his political views, he adhered to the anti-Prussian ideas that he began to form in the cadet school. The fact is rather surprising, because it was the Prussian educational institutions that gave him the opportunity to gain combat experience, which he greatly valued.

Another prominent member of the Strasser group was Herbert Blank. He was born on December 14, 1891. In 1922 he headed the German People's Movement. From 1923 to 1925 he was a contributor to the German Daily. He joined the National Socialists after the revival of the NSDAP. He immediately became friends with the Strasser brothers, and in 1927 he became not only the editor of Kampf Verlag, but also one of the greatest theorists of the left wing of the NSDAP. He was greatly impressed by the philosophy of Oswald Spengler. Apparently, it was under her influence that Blank drew up a project of the cyclical nature of history, which was ambiguously perceived by the leadership of the NSDAP. It is said that Himmler became interested in this theory. Perhaps this saved the life of G. Blank. Having ended up in a concentration camp in 1934, he was able to live safely until 1945. All this time he was engaged in historical research, which was under the personal control of the Reichsführer SS.

So, who did the Strasser grouping consist of? Otto Strasser is a political economics theorist. Herbert Blank is a philosopher of history. Major Ernst Buhucker is a specialist in military matters. We do not have enough information about the political biography and ideological attitudes of the founders of revolutionary National Socialism. But one way or another, the ideological contradictions between

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major Buhucker, G. Blank, Otto Strasser and Richard Schapke seem insignificant. At the time of the formation of the new National Socialist organization, they were of secondary importance. The Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists (KGRNS), created from these people, was able to endure many crises in the four years of its existence. The new organization owed its vitality to Otto Strasser personally, who, according to many, could have a simply magnetic effect on people.

As early as July 5, this "fighting group" assembled a temporary bureau for the centralization of the new movement, which a day later received the official name "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". It was decided to take as the basis of the political program the main ideas set forth in the draft on July 4, 1930.

Chapter 2

THE BREAK OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STRASSER BROTHERS

On June 30, 1930, Gregor Strasser officially resigned as the responsible publisher of the newspapers published by Kampf-Verlag. And although the National Socialist Letters reported this event, they did not name its real reasons. On the other hand, the opinion was cited that Gregor became careless in his journalistic activities, since the solution of important organizational tasks of the party did not leave free time. On the morning of July 3, the newspaper "Nazio

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nal socialist" added a clarification: Gregor Strasser was henceforth considered responsible for the publication of the newspapers. Gregor immediately made a response statement, which was printed in all the nationalist press. It was directed against Otto. Gregor tried to give his door slam as much public resonance as possible: "I strongly condemn the actions of the Kampf-Verlag, led by my brother, which are directed against the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany. Precisely for this reason, as early as June 30, I left the post of responsible editor of 6 Kampf-Verlag newspapers. I fully support Adolf

Hitler and the NSDAP he idolizes. The report of the National Socialist of 3 July is deliberately false." On the same day, the NSDAP faction in the Reichstag declared that it was united and observed strict discipline, obeying Adolf Hitler.

The press controlled from Munich, including the Berlin Workers' Gazette, which was still published by Goebbels for some time, published Hitler's commentaries, supplied with a long list of party functionaries loyal to the NSDAP and the Führer.

On July 4, 1930, Hitler gave the order "to destroy the Strasser group: "The National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany can no longer control the Kampf Verlag newspapers, and therefore, starting from Monday, July 1, they must be fought with all available. ways. As a result, all the leaflets of Kampf-Verlag must be regarded as hostile publications and treated accordingly.

After that, Gregor Strasser immediately

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renounced any family and personal attachments, preferring to remain loyal to Hitler and the party. He forgot about his political and ideological contradictions with Munich and joined the campaign of persecution of his brother. In a letter to the leader of the Sudeten Nazis, Rudolf Jung, he described his brother very aptly: "To leave the party and fight against it is sheer madness. He is the product of purely theoretical reasoning, born at the desk. He never attended party meetings and congresses, and therefore remained alien to the rhythm of our movement, not comprehending the soul of our people. In this letter, Gregor accused his brother of absolute narrow-mindedness, comparable to political mediocrity. At the same time, he did not quite accurately convey the essence of the negotiations with Hitler that took place on June 22. By declaring that Otto's socialist theses are insane and useless for political practice, Gregor actually betrayed his brother. He blamed his brother for infecting the newspapers created by him, Gregor, with the "stuffing of a treacherous chess game." Gregor predicted that his brother would try to get involved in politics as long as at least two hundred people bought his newspapers. Those who will buy these newspapers, according to Gregor, will be "partly ambitious sectarians and young fanatics, partly professional squabblers expelled from the party." The newspaper's bankruptcy would have been the end of Otto's political career, whom his elder brother unrepentantly called a harmless political idiot. Gregor was well aware that Hitler would have stripped him of all his posts if he had shown even the slightest sympathy.

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to the younger brother. It all boiled down to the fact that Gregor Strasser had to choose between "a great political leader and a fanatical writer who did not have any specific political experience." Without a shadow of a doubt, Gregor Strasser betrayed not only his brother, but also the idea of developing a new socialist ideology for the party, which he expressed in 1925. The reason for such a drastic change is that, firstly, he had great respect for Hitler as a talented agitator. He learned this respect from the early 1920s when he lived in Bavaria. Secondly, Gregor decided to abandon his own views, since starting from 1929 the NSDAP managed not only to achieve some tactical successes, but to acquire huge political weight throughout the country.

However, in the depths of his soul, Gregor probably continued to adhere to his socialist views. But the legal way of coming to power through an alliance with the conservatives seemed to him more preferable than a revolution that would have to be organized in alliance with the communists. He disliked the latter since the days of the Soviet Bavarian Republic. History has shown that Gregor made a very serious mistake. After coming to power, the Nazis were not going to give him real power. He was also mistaken about Otto's inexperience.

After the rupture of relations between the brothers and the creation of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists," Otto found himself completely isolated from the left wing of the NSDAP. Despite all the vicissitudes, it remained represented by such prominent figures as Count Reventlov and Otto Koch.

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In July 1930, the conflict between the brothers became irreconcilable. Gregor no longer took his younger brother's revolutionary intentions seriously. Even after a quarrel with Hitler, Gregor remained an ardent admirer of the Führer, considering Otto a paper-man, a troublemaker who was only able to comment on the National Socialist idea.

Chapter 3

"FORWARD TO THE POLITICAL BARRICADES!"

It is very difficult to determine what the reaction of the members of the NSDAP was to the call of the "revolutionary national socialists" on July 4th. We can only distinguish two stages. One covered July-August 1930, when an influx of well-known National Socialists who left the Nazi Party began to join the "Combat Commonwealth". The second was in September 1930, when the Combat Commonwealth consolidated and began to increase in numbers. Then most of the new Strasserians will go over to the National Bolshevik circles.

The "exodus" from the NSDAP of people who sympathized with Otto Strasser began in Berlin and Brandenburg. On July 7, five deputies from the National Socialist faction of the Prenzlau city council joined the KGRNS. On the same day, the acting Gauleiter of Brandenburg, Rudolf Röhm, a close friend of Wilhelm Korn, published his own appeal. This call said: "The Fuhrer of the NSDAP

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longs to continue to sit at the same table with money bags. The authors of this document emphasized that "they can hardly justify such a policy of the imperial leadership of the party."

Bobbe, one of the leaders of the Berlin organization of the NSDAP, made similar statements. A little later, he joined the "Combat Commonwealth". Following him, several dozen supporters of Rudolf Röhm came to Strasser, and some local party groups entered the new organization in full force. But even greater success awaited the Strasserians in Schleswig-Holstein. A couple of weeks before Otto Strasser left the Nazi party, supporters of the local "leftist" veterinarian Grantz were expelled from it. From them he formed the National Socialist Workers' Society. When the news came from Berlin, he immediately established contacts with Strasser and his organization in full force entered the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". In the meantime, there were incidents. During the meeting of the KGRNS in the Albertshof, the revolutionary National Socialists were attacked by storm troopers loyal to Hitler. Major Buchrucker, Grantz and many others were wounded in a bloody skirmish.

Contrary to the statements of Munich, Strasser managed to gather more than 800 people into his organization in just a few days. Among them was Bodo Uze, editor of the Schleswig-Holstein Daily, the official newspaper of the NSDAP in that land. Impressed by Strasser's ideas, he left the party. He took with him not only the local leadership of the NSDAP, but also the deputies elected to the local council.

Strasser achieved some success not only among the members of the NSDAP, but also among its youth organization, the Hitler Youth. Since 1929, the ideas of left-wing National Socialism were shared by Richard Schapke's old friend Artur Grosse. This man was not only responsible for the political education of the members of the Hitler Youth in Berlin and Brandenburg, but was also a member of the imperial board of this organization. He, without hesitation, decided to join Strasser's group. This decision was supported by a wide range of young people. In those days, all the members of the headquarters of the Hitler Youth in Gau Mecklenburg-Lübeck became Strasserians.

The youth enthusiastically accepted O. Strasser's revolutionary pathos. In those days, one leaflet was widely circulated in the ranks of the youth organization of the Nazis. "We, the youth, have been following the destruction of the Hitler Youth with anxious and frightening premonitions for the last 6 months. Our position was bearable when the NSDAP and its Führer honestly tried to fight for the liberation of the German people, following the spirit of the 25 points of the National Socialist program. But lately, "for tactical reasons", the NSDAP has taken a path that is completely incompatible with our National Socialist worldview. We young people are no longer guaranteed a change in our revolutionary pain. The NSDAP, like a year ago, is trying to defeat the 6th state in a legal way, hand in hand with the reactionaries from the "Steel Helmet". The Fuehrer, as a law-abiding minister, defends the present system and therefore works against the German Revolution. Adolf Hitler once uttered these words: "Capital should not be the master of the country, it should

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be her servant." A few months ago, the Munich party leadership suddenly announced: "We reject expropriation and insist on the principle of preserving private property. We cannot in any way reconcile ourselves to such a betrayal of the poor strata and the idea of socialism. We, as before, are for the fulfillment of all 25 points of our national socialist program. We reject any cooperation with the current system. We are against any agreements with red-white-black or red-yellow-black reaction. We act in the spirit of the 25 Points, advocating the destruction of the present system, the future German Revolution, and the great National Socialist Germany." This text was signed by prominent leaders of the Hitler Youth: Lothar Hielscher, Walter Unger, Walter Jarzombek. The long-awaited split in the Hitler Youth occurred on July 18, 1930. On this day, the head of this NSDAP youth organization in Stuttgart, Karl Baumann, announced his intention to join Otto Strasser's group. In his open letter, he stated: "The entry of numerous reactionaries and conservatives into the party, the alliance with Hugenberg, the arrogant and cowardly distortion of the party program, the coalition policy⁶ of Thuringia and Saxony give the NSDAP an anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary character." Later, Karl Baumann, the author of numerous polemical texts, would join a group of social revolutionary nationalists led by Karl Petel. But most members

1 Colors of the Kaiser and Republican German flags.

the new Hitler Youth who followed him would prefer to remain in Strasser's organization. Otto Strasser, Buchrucker and Blank decided to use the exodus of young people from the Hitler Youth to create their own youth organization, the National Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Youth. The leadership of the new formation was entrusted to Richard Schapke and Arthur Grosse.

Under these conditions, the so-called "National Socialists" decided to join the revolutionary National Socialists. Those expelled by Hitler for some

then minor sins from the party of the deputies of the Mecklenburg Landtag Hildebrand and Steingatt. On July 11, they changed their mind, declaring that they had never carried out anti-party activities and that their expulsion from the NSDAP was a mistake. This return of the "prodigal sons" essentially saved Munich from a severe organizational and political crisis. As the then Gauleiter of Mecklenburg rightly noted: "The two Sturmführers left the organization. The situation is critical." The return of Hildebrand and Steingatt back to the NSDAP (now accepted with open arms) essentially stopped the further split of the Nazi party.

Despite the fact that the transition of members of the NSDAP to the KGRNS was gradually stopped, this circumstance had a very hard effect on the political life of local party groups. The last prominent figures to leave the Nazi Party were: Gauleiter of Brandenburg Emil Holtz, member of the Hamburg city council Walter Schnorr, who had a very strong group at his disposal. But nai

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Strasser achieved more success when he won over to his side the Gauleiter Danzig and the local assault troops Bruno Fricke. Later, this man, fleeing the Nazi terror, had to emigrate to South America, where until 1944, as an employee of the Strasser organization, he spread the ideas of revolutionary National Socialism in Argentina and Bolivia.

The crisis in Danzig turned out to be so strong that Hitler had to not only expel B. Fricke and his supporters from the party, but generally dissolve the local party organization and SA units. By August 20, 1930, the "Fighting Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" had at its disposal four party groups in Berlin, ten party groups in other German states and a huge number of sympathizers in Schleswig-Holstein.

Between August 10 and 25, Strasser managed to create two more new branches ("battle groups") and planned the emergence of seventeen. By September 1930, the KGRNS consisted of 35 branches, which not only spread the ideas of Strasser, but tried to gain a foothold where the revolutionary National Socialists did not have a strong position. A police report dated July 15, 1930, reported that the number of members of the "Combat Commonwealth" fluctuated between 3800-5000 people. Of these, 260 people

circulated in Berlin, about 1000 in Brandenburg, 1500 in Saxony, about 2000 in the Ruhr and about 200 in Mecklenburg. This report does not

a powerful group in Schleswig-Holstein is indicated, so the figure of 5000 seems to be somewhat underestimated.

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autumn 1930. One of the reasons was the crisis that shook the ranks of this organization. Another reason lay in the ban on the newspapers of the "Combat Commonwealth", as they "glorified terrorism." On November 15, Kampf-Verlag ceased operations altogether. For a while, the press of the revolutionary National Socialists completely disappeared from the shelves of the Newsstands.

But one way or another, it was during this period that 10 new groups arose that were active in Vienna and even in Munich! Already in January 1931, the "Combat Commonwealth" was experiencing a new upsurge, which reached its peak in March of that year. During this period, CRNC was able to create 20 new groups. The "Combat Publishing House" has started working again. Development did not subside even in late spring. In May 1931, 10 new branches and one stronghold appeared. Otto Strasser continued to expand his organization geographically.

When in May 1931 revolutionary attack aircraft led by Oberleutnant Walter Shtennes joined the Combat Commonwealth, the KGRNS numbered more than 6,000 people, having 90 strongholds throughout Germany. In order to continue organizational development, the Combat Commonwealth needed a nationwide newspaper, which would not be hindered by litigation between the NSDAP and Kampf-Verlag. The reason for such litigation was the fact that the "Combat Publishing House" legally belonged not only to Otto Strasser and his daughter-in-law, but also to the wife of Hinkel, who remained in the NSDAP. Hinkel himself insisted on principle

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closure of the publishing house. From a formal point of view, he could easily liquidate this enterprise. With the support of Hitler, Hynkel began a lawsuit against Otto Strasser. As a result, Strasser began to publish only the National Socialist, the Berlin Workers' Gazette and the National Socialist Letters, while their circulation fell catastrophically.

When Kampf-Verlag was closed on October 1, 1930, Strasser was forced to create a new enterprise, to which "he gave the name of one of his past newspapers, the National Socialist." It should be noted that the "Combat Commonwealth" constantly had to face financial difficulties. In August 1930, the circulation of the National Socialist Letters fell to 4,000 copies, while the daily newspaper began to appear only twice a week. The ban on publishing activity for Otto Strasser, which lasted until December 15, 1930, completely undermined the material condition of Kampf-Verlag. It was decided to stop issuing any printed publications. It was supposed to concentrate all available financial resources to publish the newspaper "German Revolution", whose circulation, according to the idea of the founders, was to exceed 10,000 copies.

At that time, KGRNS had a small headquarters in Berlin, located on Zimmerstraße. It simultaneously served as a place for holding meetings and meetings of functionaries, and a school for leading cadres. The office was guarded by volunteers from the so-called "combat unit",

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[7 which numbered about two dozen people in Berlin.

We have very little information regarding the financial situation of the "Combat Commonwealth". It is only known that money was so tight that Strasser was forced to abandon the exempt rates and use only the voluntary labor of his supporters. Apparently, the money that the KGRNS had was donations from the most active members of the Commonwealth. But since at that time Otto Strasser was in contact with Erhardt and Shpilman's bureau, who actively fought against right-wing radical forces, it can be assumed that the "Combat Commonwealth" received money either from the government or from private individuals. But even if such subsidies existed, they could only partly mitigate the financial crisis in which the CRNC was constantly living.

But, despite all the difficulties, during the year KGRNS managed to create an organizational base throughout Germany and even beyond its borders. However, compared with the NSDAP, the Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists remained a tiny organization. While the majority of Völkische and paramilitarist structures fell under the influence of the NSDAP, the Combat Commonwealth continued to develop exclusively in line with the ideology of the "conservative revolution". With some certainty, this time can be called the "golden age" of revolutionary National Socialism. Why? Because already in the very structure of the KGRNS and its ideology, multiple prerequisites for subsequent crises and collapse were laid.

"NATIONAL-BOLSHEVIST" CRISIS

The global crisis of 1929 and the subsequent rise of the NSDAP were the main reasons for the deterioration of relations between the two branches of National Socialism. A fundamental change in the political and economic situation in Germany forced the Combat Commonwealth, then an opposition movement, which was only at the stage of its formation, to take a more concrete position on vital issues. After the "defeat" of Brüning!

1 Heinrich Brüning (1885-1970), German politician of the period of the Weimar Republic, chancellor. Born November 26, 1885 in Münster, Westphalia. Studied philosophy and political sciences. In 1920-1930 he held responsible positions in the Catholic trade unions. In May 1924 he was elected to the Reichstag, where he took a prominent place in the faction of the Center Party, and from 1929 became the leader of this faction. He was closely associated with the Vatican. March 28, 1930 proclaimed Chancellor of Germany, formed the government, which was the first of a series of transitional cabinets from the Weimar regime to Nazism. The Brüning government made extensive use of Art. 48 of the Weimar constitution of 1919 to pass emergency anti-democratic laws, passed decrees on lowering wages, introducing new taxes, persecuting anti-fascist workers' organizations, and especially the Communist Party. In foreign policy, Brüning saw his main task in buying time for the military strengthening of Germany. In 1932, he led the German delegation to the International Geneva Conference on Disarmament. On May 30, 1932, German President Paul Hindenburg sent Brüning a letter demanding his resignation. He was replaced in this post by von Papen. After Hitler came to power, Brüning retired from politics and emigrated to the United States in 1934. He returned to Cologne in 1951 and took up teaching. In 1954 he again left for the USA. Bruening died on March 30, 1970 in Norwick, Vermont.

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When voting in Parliament and dissolving the Reichstag, the revolutionary National Socialists, like the entire German public, expected a significant party reshuffle and a change in the political landscape of the country. It was this factor that was to predetermine the further development of Germany.

As early as July 20, in his article "The Lie of September 14", which condemned the upcoming elections to the Reichstag, Strasser spoke of the "titanic growth of the old lies" and the impossibility of fundamental changes within this old rotten system. Moreover, for Strasser, the most important event of that time was not the dissolution of parliament, but the "decomposition" of the German People's National Party, which led to another rapprochement between Hitler and Hugenberg. The fundamental difference of the new bloc was that Hitler began to play the role of the leader of the national opposition, and Hugenberg was only his henchman, being on the sidelines. "Hitler will be Hugenberg's heir," asserted. Strasser was waiting. He made the assumption that the cooperation between the NSDAP and the Steel Helmet would take place in a purely fascist spirit. In turn, this will lead to the fact that "exclusively bourgeois, capitalist voters will give their votes, who will see their only salvation in fascism." In his opinion, this electoral maneuver was an obvious sign of "the pettiness and insignificance of German parliamentarism."

As the elections to the Reichstag drew to a close, the coalition was coming apart at the seams. The KGRNS foresaw not only the strengthening of the communists and the Nazis, but also the fact that Brüning would prevent the creation of a new ruling coalition in the Reichstag. The strength of the Nazis was

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tempting, since any of their opposition activities was doomed to failure. Strasser assumed that the NSDAP would abandon its former program, because it would lead to the re-dissolution of the Reichstag. The "Combat Commonwealth" did not at all see in the Reichstag a factor that would determine German domestic policy. The only right decision for the leadership of the KGRNS was to call for a boycott of the elections. This decision was taken on August 17, 1930. .

The Combat Commonwealth even issued a manifesto urging the Germans not to take part in the elections. It was addressed to "workers, peasants, soldiers and German youth" who saw the pointlessness of participation in elections. It argued that at that time, domestic policy was completely dependent on foreign policy, and therefore any support for the ruling system meant approval of the Treaty of Versailles. "The Reichstag will cease to be a subject of German politics, together with Versailles and Locarno, together with Dawes and Jung. He, the Reichstag, is an instrument of enslavement, constantly bargaining with various interest groups." The elections and those who took part in them only supported the bankrupt capitalist system. The leadership of the KGRNS demanded that all German revolutionaries, by their non-participation in the elections, destroy the fraud of the Young Plan, and "the time of ballots was replaced by the time of direct actions."

A week before the election, the Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta, which had not yet ceased to exist, published a forecast of the voting results. It was assumed that the Social Democrats would lose 3-5

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the party will be reduced by 20-30 deputies, and the NSDAP will become one of the leading parties in Germany, acquiring 60-70 new seats in parliament. This prediction turned out to be essentially prophetic, despite the fact that he underestimated the strength of the Nazis. Their faction grew by 95 deputies!

The actual victory of the NSDAP put the theorists of revolutionary National Socialism in a very difficult position. The issue of the National Socialist Letters, which appeared the day after the announcement of the results of the election race, preferred to confine itself to vague comments: "September 14 passed the fateful hour, and the capitalist bourgeoisie, with the help of the NSDAP, avoided catastrophe literally on the eve of its death. The betrayal of the Nazis, who betrayed their failed socialist ideals, will become obvious to everyone. The elections showed, first of all, to others that those groups whose slogans and programs are not strong enough are disappearing. Only the so-called extremist parties were able to stay on the plabo. A sign of this is the radicalization of the nation, the growth of revolutionary sentiment."

At that time, the activity of the "Combat Commonwealth" was to propagate the "true content of genuine National Socialism." Then the "Commonwealth" set the only goal: "when the final disappointment in the NSDAP comes, to direct the people on the path of revolution."

After a meeting of the commanding staff of the Combat Commonwealth, Strasser decided to abandon the cautious wait-and-see tactics in order to use

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Hitler's success for his own purposes. It might even seem that he was glad of his success. In the article "The Revolution Marches," he wrote: "Seldom has one week brought such deep satisfaction to the German revolutionary National Socialists." He spoke of "the steady growth of revolutionary sentiment and the growing movement against the policies of the executive branch." The KKE and the NSDAP were portrayed in this article almost as allies, with the difference that the Nazis

realized social revolutionary aspirations among the bourgeoisie, and the communists among the proletarians. But at the same time, he emphasized that both of these parties, due to their class character, were not in a position to carry out the revolution. Only the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" was suitable for this task. Hitler was, of course, useful, but he had already played his part. His "great historical significance" (according to Strasser) was that he was "the drummer of the revolution". But "the invisible forces of history threw him to the right positions." "The drummer of the revolution, who grew up in the trenches of the great war, became a statesman," Otto Strasser summed up his thought.

It is quite possible to assume that the theorists of the "Commonwealth" sincerely believed that it was they who set the rules of the revolution. Maybe they really believed that their movement was the future. But the rank-and-file members could hardly be deceived. They understood how weak the "Combat Commonwealth" was compared to the NSDAP and the KKE. Many of them saw the communists as the only alternative to Hitler. And joined them in the hope of leading armed

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new struggle against the advancing fascism. These moods and Hitler's victory in the elections on September 14, 1930 caused a crisis in the KGRNS, which was called the "National Bolshevik". It was then that the first split occurred in Strasser's organization.

On August 2A, 1930, the central press organ of the Communist Party of Germany published "Programmatic comments on the national and social liberation of the German people". This document introduced a fair amount of confusion in the ranks of the "Combat Commonwealth". What happened? The fact is that the comments were focused on joining the leadership of the revolutionary National Socialists to the KKE. In addition to social measures to improve the living standards of the general population, program comments paid great attention to the national question. Individual National Socialists from the entourage of Otto Strasser considered these points to be the strongest part of the program statement.

"We Communists oppose the territorial division and plunder of Germany based on the tyrannical Treaty of Versailles. We solemnly declare to all peoples, to all foreign governments and capitalists, that in the event of our coming to power we will annul all obligations stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles. We will not pay a pfennig for the imperialist. loans, credits and investments made by Germany. Having come to power, we will mercilessly put an end to the enterprises of banking magnates who are now openly dictating their pain to our country. We will carry out the proletarian

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nationalization of banks and cancellation of debts to German and foreign capitalists".

But the theoreticians of the KKE saw the guarantee of coming to power and protecting the interests of Germany in a broad class alliance: "When all workers, all poor peasants, all employees, all working middle strata rally around the Communist Party of Germany, then they will become an incredible force that will not only destroy the dominance of capital, but will render senseless any invasion both outside and inside the country."

The Strasserians have been watching the Communist Party for a long time. As early as July 20, 1930, the Berlin Rabochaya Gazeta published a huge review dedicated to Stalin's triumphant victory at the party congress in Moscow. The author of the article analyzed the situation in the world, pointing out the coincidence in time of the world economic crisis, the crisis of capitalism and the widespread growth of nationalist sentiments. He called on Moscow and the German communists to recognize as erroneous the calls for world revolution and class struggle.

The first official reaction of the Strasserians to the change in the CIT program was Eugen Mossakowski's article "National Bolshevism", which was published on September 7, 1930. In it, he called the "Programme Commentaries" "the most significant historical document", which meant the accession of the CI to the "front of the German resistance and liberation policy." However, he had no illusions that the Communists were in a position to abandon Marxist theory. For him it was

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It is important that the resolute desire of the German communists to deal with the predatory Treaty of Versailles was a response to "the capitulation of the Hitlerite party to the world hostile to Germany." This step directed the communists on the path from which they had no right to turn. At the end of his panegyric to "National Bolshevism," Mossakovsky hinted at the possibility of working out a common tactical program of action.

But on September 14, a slightly different reaction followed. On that day, Rozikat, the most consistent supporter of Strasser's theses, and Ernst Nikisch prudently spoke out against rapprochement with the "National Communists". Rozikat saw a way out of this situation only in the creation of a broad "Front of the Oppressed", which would unite all the unions, organizations and parties that advocated the revolutionary path of liquidating the Weimar Republic. At the same time, Rozikat emphasized that communists and true National Socialists could help a friend only if they abandoned their specific ways of developing society. Indeed, national idealism and historical materialism were hardly compatible. As a result, he assumed that the union of the oppressed was to result in a new national communist utopia. Nikisch's analysis largely repeated Rozikat's conclusions, but here the author went much further: "Programme comments are a unique development in recent German politics... The German worker no longer feels himself only a representative of his own class: he felt his national roots and realized that social struggle could

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conduct only 6 forms of national liberation struggle".

Ernst Nikisch had his own thoughts about the comments on the program of the KKE. They seemed to him a perfectly logical step in the struggle against the imperialist powers and their allies in Germany. Among those he included not only conservatives and liberals, but also social democrats. He considered the leaders of the German Social Democracy "agents of French and Polish imperialism." "All the actions of the corrupt social democracy are a betrayal not only of the nation and the country, but also of the vital interests of the German working people." The new program of the KKE from the very beginning assumed a comprehensive political development of the country, and E. Nikisch already saw "the outlines of the front of the German liberation struggle, which for the first time will be held under the sign of a single victorious strategic idea."

Hitler, according to Nikisch, did not understand the need to fight against capitalism and the Western powers. For him, it was only a transitional, intermediate state. But Hitler managed to mobilize the middle strata: "He is a drummer who never could become a commander. The policy of the coalition between Hitler and Hugenberg pursued by 6th Thuringia, the propensity for bureaucratization, the Italian-English orientation only prove that his party is only an attempt to emasculate the national-revolutionary aspirations of the middle strata, who are fascinated by nationalism, but are completely socially indifferent ". The national activity of the proletariat temporarily passed into the hands of the communists. But on sa

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In fact, it must take place under the banner of National Socialism, "the expression of which is only the Strasserians."

The articles by Mossakowski, Rozikat and Nikisch were unanimous in their assessments: 'they all believed in the national reorientation of the KKE. For them, this was a natural development of events, but not at all a tactical step taken by the communists. The theorists of revolutionary National Socialism even began to use the terms "National Bolshevism" and "National Capitalism" in this connection. The transition of the communists from internationalism to nationalism seemed to the national revolutionary intellectuals to be evidence of the widespread spread of nationalist thinking, which found fertile soil primarily in countries suffering from "colonial exploitation". These people welcomed this trend as positive and conducive to the creation of a united front against capitalism and the Versailles system. But for the creation of a "new Germany", this program seemed insufficient to them, since many of the ideas outlined in it were clearly "non-German".

To achieve this goal, an alliance between the revolutionary National Socialists and the Communists was theoretically necessary. In practice, however, it was impossible until the KKE decided to become a national party.

One issue of the National Socialist Letters was devoted almost entirely to the National Bolshevik question. It is very interesting what significance these debates had for the Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists. The most important

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The document in this issue of the Strasser newspaper was "An Open Letter to the Leadership of the KPI" written by Karl Petel. This publication appeared after a meeting organized by Strasser in Neukölln was disrupted by the communists. They occupied all the stands and began to conduct their own agitation. Petel made an obvious connection between this incident and a series of slanderous articles about the "Combat Commonwealth" that appeared in the Morning Berlin newspaper. He tried to provoke disputes, stormy polemics, so that the communists would recognize the national revolutionaries as natural: allies. "Strictly speaking, what would you follow, gentlemen functionaries of the KKE? For the party? If you are doing the right thing, then why are you systematically hiding from your supporters that there are other forces that are ideologically, of course, alien, but practically related: to you. Those forces that stand for the approach of socialism... We consider it a fatal mistake in the struggle for the rights of the oppressed people the short-term tactics of the Party of clashing between revolutionary forces instead of the tactics of jointly approaching the collapse of capitalism.

Petel characterized the clash between members of the KPD and the revolutionary National Socialists as the actions of people who had no political sense. In his opinion, the real political situation could be corrected by renouncing mutual hostility and concluding a tactical alliance.

When Petel wrote this article, he did not yet know that the Comintern had taken a hostile position towards the Strasser group. In fact, the names

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but this explained the incident that occurred in September 1930. And the attitude of the Communist International was unequivocal: "How can one evaluate both national fascist groups? The most dangerous are the revolutionary National Socialists, that is, the group

Otto Strasser. The more we observe, the more we become convinced that their role is to prevent the liberation of the masses when the true National Socialist Party is reborn. Their objective role is to split the masses. They must be exposed as provocateurs. It is a fact that the Strasser group is much weaker than the Hitler group and that they oppose Hitler. But the true state of affairs is hidden from the glance of an outside observer. Namely: the essence of the Strasser supporters is not that they are left-wing national fascists, but that they are fascist agents of the sinister army of the bourgeoisie.

Strasser seriously feared a split in the Combat Commonwealth. Some of his supporters could in fact go over to the Communist Party of Germany. That is why he tried in the same issue of National Socialist Letters to distance himself from Petel's statements. In doing so, he artfully formed the idea that he alone represents "German Bolshevism". To prove this, he had to expose the "programme comments" of the communists as a cunning tactical move that aimed to split the ranks of the revolutionary National Socialists and the national revolutionary ("authentic")

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Later, Christian Klee, in a number of his articles, tried to substantiate the plausibility of the idea of "true Strasser Bolshevism." According to this idea, the real Bolshevik organization in Germany was the Combat Commonwealth, while the KKE was a communist organization. The question asked in the film "Chapaev": "Are you for the Bolsheviks or for the Communists" - in Germany of those times, it acquired quite specific political outlines. Christian Klee contrasted these two concepts.

Communism is the Third International; freedom equality Brotherhood; manifesto of Karl Marx; tasks packed in boxes with foreign words. But Bolshevism was for him almost an aristocratic concept. These are electrified Russia, parades of the Red Army, the struggle for power in China, philosophical conversations between Commissar Chicherin and Count Brockdorff-Rantzau in a Moscow night restaurant. These are suppers at the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, where General Hammerstein was sitting opposite the bandit Max Helz.

Communism is a program, a dogma, a social theory, a lot of thoughts and a lot of vulgarity. Bolshevism is an energy, a movement of force caused by life itself. This is Sorel's violence, which is directed exclusively against existing laws and authorities. Bolshevism is an event, a deed, an action. National Communism could never come, because National Bolshevism existed.

The appearance of this article meant a complete rejection of Mossakovsky's theses. Klee proclaimed that National Bolshevism could exist in Germany

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only in the form of revolutionary National Socialism. The "programme comments" of the KKE were not even a nationally programmed communism, but just a bare theory from the heyday of liberalism, which dared to abandon the laws of the system that gave birth to it. The actions of the KKE are "mathematics" that conducts cold calculations and is alien to the reality of life, and even more so to fate. This "mathematics" thinks only about how to achieve an unrealistic tactical goal. Meanwhile, the task of the "Combat Commonwealth" remained the same - to turn National Communism into National Socialism, in its National Bolshevik understanding. The "Programme Commentaries" were finally crushed in the article by Ludwig Alvens "Revolution on Paper".

But not all revolutionary National Socialists agreed with such conclusions of their leadership. In their opinion, the KKE, having touched upon national issues, took the position of the KGRNS, which, in turn, deprived the "Combat Commonwealth" of the right to exist. These national revolutionary cadres took the position of Mossakovsky. They were inspired by what they thought was a historic upheaval in the KKE. One of them published a kind of pro-communist "creed" in the pages of the National Socialist. The author declared that the National Socialists were ready without delay, together with the Communists, to crush the existing system. He was "ready to unite even with the devil, which, in spite of the blind faith of the bourgeoisie, will cease to be a devilish manifestation." The author did not care at all if, after such statements, he was called a Bolshevik. |

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In the meantime, on August 28, 1930, the organizational head of the "Combat Commonwealth" Rem openly stated that any member of the KGRNS could sign under the manifesto of the KKE. At the same time, Wilhelm Korn, who shared this opinion, argued that one should not expect such a response from the KKE. But be that as it may, during that period, 15 articles appeared in the National Socialist, which set out in detail the essence of the communist commentaries. This was to show the members of the Commonwealth, who believed in the national renewal of the KKE, that the executive committee of the KGRNS was, if not reactionary, then at least reformist.

On October 4, 1930, Rote Fahne reported that three leaders of the revolutionary National Socialists had gone over to the Communist Party. It became a political sensation, since it was about Rem, Korn and Lorf, the responsible leader of the Berlin organization of the "Commonwealth". Korn and Rehm believed they represented the proletarian adherents of the revolutionary National Socialists. They believed that the path to national freedom lay only through social revolution. Lorf mainly did not accept Strasser's understanding of socialism, which assumed the socialization of industry and economy by only 49%. He posed the question to Otto Strasser: "Could one be called a socialist who not only renounced the class struggle, but even denied the very fact of its existence." painful consequences, he made clear not only the ideological differences within the organization

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tion, but also the political heterogeneity of the members of this organization. Ideological unanimity was preserved here only in matters of slogans: revolution, the rejection of Hitler's conciliation, and the need for a new socio-economic order in Germany. Superficial unity concealed deep differences, which subsequently led to a protracted crisis in the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists".

, Chapter 5

THE FIRST IMPERIAL CONGRESS OF THE "BATTLE COMMONWEALTH"

Initially, a national meeting of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" was scheduled for the first days of October 1930. But it took a couple of weeks later - the executive committee took time to replace the leading cadres, who had gone over to the communists.

Despite the disputes raging earlier, this First Imperial Congress not only clearly outlined the attitude towards the "Programme Commentaries" of the KKE, but also developed a theoretical basis for the activities of the "Commonwealth of Fighting". As a result, Major Buhruker prepared the Programming Foundations of Revolutionary National Socialism - The New Order. In fact, this pamphlet was nothing more than a somewhat revised "14 Theses of the German Revolution", which since August 1929 served as the unofficial political program of the KGRNS.

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With the consent of Strasser, Buchrucker demanded nationalization carried out in accordance with the spirit of "German socialism". In addition, the "new" program envisaged the creation of handicraft enterprises and the return of the urban population to agriculture. In order for the state, weakened by the bureaucracy, to become efficient again, responsible decisions had to be made by a narrow circle of leaders. This "limited leadership state" had to start a massive migration in order to eliminate local features. This primarily concerned Prussia. Such measures were supposed to guarantee the unity of the German people, freed from the chains of Versailles imperialism.

The Imperial Congress opened on 26 October 1930. The first day was dedicated to discussion of program requirements and organizational issues. 17 delegates heard two political presentations. The first one was made by Mossakovsky. His speech was devoted to the relationship between the communists and the revolutionary National Socialists. "With the existing contradictions between the West and the East, we are clearly not on the side of the West, to which, by the way, Italy also belongs. We are on the side of Russia. Our attitude towards the Communist Party is as follows: we will support every essential revolutionary action of the Communist Party. But we must also organize contacts and cooperate with all other revolutionary organizations in Germany. Everyone who opposes the system must be supported."

Although Mossakovsky welcomed the actions of com

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Moonies, but he fundamentally rejected the idea of a merger with the KKE. He suggested that the leading role in the creation of the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist front should be played by the Combat Commonwealth. Subsequently, Mossakovsky began to attack the church and the parties of the center, which supported the "Jesuit dictator" Brüning. "As long as all ecclesiastical structures stand on the side of the exploiters, we reject them. Perhaps the day will come when we will throw off the church bells and turn them into cannons! We crave chaos because we feel it. ourselves stronger and tame him."

In his speech, Strasser spoke about the tasks in the current political environment. He stated that the "Combatant Society" occupied a special position, being between two mass parties. The NSDAP was a petty-bourgeois party, and the KKE, due to its liberal fundamental origins, could neither unite nor provide the necessary forces for a total revolution. Both of these parties were not in a position to realize true German socialism. The revolution, in his understanding, was a phenomenon that could not be developed and prepared. The role of the "Combat Commonwealth" was to prepare personnel for the post-revolutionary era even before the revolution. This was done not at all in order to prepare an illegal armed operation, but in order to create a spiritual movement that would unite representatives of various political forces. "We must, can and will gather together convinced German revolutionaries, create a vanguard of 20,000 to 25,000 united people. They will move not only

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In the rhythm of common feelings, they will not only show determination to achieve a common goal, but they will realize their common path and will want to follow it inexorably until they reach the goal.

The "fighting community of revolutionary national socialists" should not have passively waited for the inevitability of a catastrophe. In the chaos of which Mossakowski spoke, the revolutionary will was to be born. That is why it was necessary to support any criticism of the existing system, to reveal the contradictions of capitalism, calling for a decisive battle. Both the rebellious peasants and the factory workers were to take part in this general battle. The KGRNS, "a school for junior officers of the German Revolution," was supposed to work out a new "total ideology"—revolutionary National Socialism—on the basis of the criticism of bourgeois society that had been voiced. "The 25 points of the NSDAP, which came into being in 1920, remained in force, but the goals and ideology of the "Commonwealth of Arms" were determined exclusively by the "14 Theses of the German Revolution".

These theses covered three main areas: foreign policy, reform of the economy and the state, and the creation of a new culture. The achievement of the freedom of the German people and the unification of all the Germanic tribes of the Central European living space was possible only under the condition of a tireless, fanatical struggle against the Versailles and Saint-Germain peace treaties.

The anti-imperialist movement spawned by the German Revolution was supposed to defend national thinking. The new movement was supposed to deny the domination of some peoples over others

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nations. The centralized authoritarian state would guide the German people, representing the unification of all the forces of the nation that were necessary for the structural change of German society.

The elimination of parliamentarism and the creation of class-professional chambers were supposed to become prerequisites for the formation of a "fateful society" and collective economic responsibility. German socialism was supposed to return to the nation the ownership of the land, land holdings, minerals. Every German citizen would have the right to use them. Such innovations were supposed to banish any personal selfish interests from economic and economic life.

The accumulation of material wealth was to be substantially limited. This would contribute to the improvement of the national organism, which suffered from serious ailments generated by the "world capitalist crisis". The "German Renaissance" was to follow only after a resolute rejection of racial and cultural internationalism, after the start of an irrevocable struggle against Jewry and Freemasonry. The last thesis summed up the entire program of the "Commonwealth of Arms": "The German revolution is national, as it opposes the enslavement of the German nation; social, because it fights against the tyranny of capital; popular, because it opposes the destruction of the German soul.

The first imperial congress of the KGRNS solved not only ideological, but also organizational problems. From the beginning of October 1930 they became

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more and more pressing. At first, the symbolism of the "Combat Commonwealth" was discussed. It was decided to take the NSDAP flag as a basis - a red cloth with a white circle in the center. But the swastika should be replaced by the symbolism of the peasant uprising of 1525 - the shoe. But in December it was decided to abandon such a flag. To make the banner of the "Combat Commonwealth" completely identical to the banners of the peasant rebels of the 11th century, the main color was made black, and the shoe was replaced with a crossed hammer and sword. The uniform of the revolutionary national-socialists - a brown shirt that did not have any insignia. In addition, the congress participants were offered a draft charter developed by the executive committee. It was adopted unanimously. This document stated that "the goal of the KGRNS was the internal and external freedom of the German people, which could be achieved through the socialist revolution and the national liberation struggle." Everyone joining the "Combat Commonwealth" must necessarily share these goals. Anyone could be expelled from the ranks of the revolutionary National Socialists for membership in international organizations, such as the Masonic Lodge or the Rotary Club. The KGRNS provided for a two-stage membership: the revolutionary National Socialists were divided into activists and supporters. When voting, the former had two votes, the latter only one.

The members of the organization were united according to the territorial principle into "battle groups". The leader of the group was elected by simple vote. "Battle groups" united in a district, headed by

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district leader elected by simple majority vote: at a meeting of group leaders. The supreme body of the "Combat Commonwealth" was the executive committee, consisting of 3-5 people. Its members reported annually to the imperial congress, which was nominated by one deputy from each "fighting group". It was the imperial congress that could, by a majority of votes, amend both the political program of the "Combat Commonwealth" and its Charter.

When deciding important issues in the executive committee, the imperial treasurer and the organizational leader each had one vote. If necessary, special commissions could even be created. From the district leaders, the organizational leader, the treasurer, the chairmen of the commissions and the president of the youth organization, the Commonwealth Governing Council was formed.

One can note the special ingenuity of Strasser, who managed to repeat the structure of the NSDAP in the Charter, seasoning it with some kind of "democratic centralism". Apparently, he hoped by this to attract defectors from the NSDAP. However, the election process at the battle group level only masked the concentration of power in the hands of the executive committee, which, if desired, could put any candidate through. In fact, this body consisted of only three people: Otto Strasser himself, Herbert Blank and Major Buchrucker. The leaders of the youth section were Richard Schapke and Franke-Griksch, who was better known under the pseudonym Hildebrand. Eugen Mossakovsky, together with Blank, published newspapers and magazines.

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cash, actually heading the press service of the "Combat Commonwealth". Dr. Heimsoth headed the bureau for the study of foreign policy issues. The Bureau of Domestic Policy Problems included Mossakowski, Wafer, Oldenburg, and Gottnard Schild. If we look at the further development of the KGRNS, we can safely say that the central authorities were headed by nationalists, and supporters of the revolutionary socialist orientation (Mossakovsky, Schild, Oldenburg) concentrated in the commissions of the "Combat Commonwealth". Perhaps we have not yet said anything about Gottnard Schild. At one time he was the leader

one of the sections of the NSDAP. Like many left-wing National Socialists, he left the Hitler Party in August 1930. At that time, Strasser was in great need of experienced political cadres. This was at least indicated by the quick rise of Schild in the "Combat Commonwealth" and his active work in the internal political bureau.

Despite the fact that during the congress a unified program of the KGRNS was adopted, the top of the "Combat Commonwealth" did not adhere to any clear ideology. The people who were there had a variety of ideas about socialism. Representatives of various organizations were invited to the meeting with the so-called "friends of the revolutionary National Socialists" on October 17, 1930. Ernst Nikisch, the leader of the Bündisch, was there! youth Lamberti, former comrades-in-arms of the NSDAP, etc. e. At this meeting, which was more like a conference, Otto Strasser

1 Bundische is a youth soil movement that took its roots from the Migratory Birds organization.

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put a list of those organizations with which he was ready to begin political cooperation. This list included the "Resistance" of Ernst Nikisch, the "Oberland" Union, the "Werewolf"! and Schillugend. The last Schillugend organization, the Eckenhard Union, was created by one of the leaders of the volunteer corps, Gerhard Rosbach. After the unsuccessful "beer coup", this paramilitarist organization continued its development in Austria, Bavaria and other German lands in southern Germany. The members of this union sympathized with the NSDAP, the ideas of Ernst Nikisch, the conservative-revolutionary ideas of Arthur Meller van den Broek. In December 1930, the radical elements left this organization to take up political activities. They were not satisfied with the role assigned to them: voluntary work, training the population to protect against air raids in case of war.

In this list, as we can see, paramilitary and nationalist organizations were represented mainly. Strasser refused to make an alliance with the left, including the communists. However, on a number of issues he was ready to cooperate with the opposition trade unions and Red Help. On November 2, 1930, the Berlin Rabochaya newspaper received the task of visually demonstrating

1 Please do not confuse with the Nazi underground organization, which at the end of World War II was supposed to launch a partisan struggle on the territory of occupied Germany. Also, you should not translate the name of the organization with which O. Strasser intended to cooperate as "Werewolf" (Vegio). In this situation, we are talking about borrowing from the history of the name of the partisan peasant units, which were called \ertuyuo. And so, a more correct translation implies the name "Armed wolves", "War wolves".

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review the results of the congress, including on the issue of attitudes towards the KKE.

Literally the day before, the leader of the German Communists, Heinz Neumann, speaking at the Berlin Sports Palace, called on the National Socialists and "revolutionary assault squads to stop the fratricidal struggle," which was not in the interests of the proletariat. This statement gave the executive committee of CIRNS a reason to repeat the opinion expressed at the imperial congress. The leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" welcomed the courage of the communists, who dared to make such statements. It even remembered that in many ways the interests of the NSDAP and the KPD coincided, since they were focused on protecting the German people. But at the same time, the executive committee emphasized that the main task of the revolutionary masses was the creation of a united socialist front with its own leader at the head. Naturally, this front had to be under the direct control of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists".

At the same time, two articles appeared in the Commonwealth press, which reminded readers that the worst enemies of the German people were Marxism and reaction. The conclusion was traditional: to carry out a total revolution, which in principle neither the KKE nor the NSDAP were capable of, was to be carried out by Otto Strasser's "Combat Commonwealth".

The First Imperial Congress quite clearly demonstrated the hostile position of the leadership of the revolutionary National Socialists towards the KKE. However, this was not fixed in any way in official documents. It was during the congress that Strasser realized that such a position required a clear ideological justification. This is a requirement

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It was done at least so that the average layman could distinguish the "Combat Commonwealth" from the communist and Nazi parties. It was after the First Imperial Congress that the nature of the National Socialist Letters and the tone of the articles published in them changed radically. Previously, this newspaper prevented its own comments on current political events. Now its pages have been almost completely devoted to large articles of a purely theoretical nature.

Such changes led to another "national Bolshevik" crisis. Later, Strasser realized that for a very long time he underestimated the significance of National Bolshevik ideas. But then, in October 1950, he was ready to do away with them. The congress led to the fact that several political groups were formed in the "Combat Commonwealth". Left revolutionaries occupied many important places in the leadership of the new organization. Although in those days it seemed to many that Strasser, with his "theses of the German Revolution," won a landslide victory. He decided to launch an offensive on all fronts. A very dangerous intention, because the "Commonwealth" has not yet recovered from the first crisis.

Chapter 6

COMMUNISTS: ALLIES OR OPPONENTS? \

In those days, Otto Strasser and his associates had not the slightest illusion about the attitude of the Nazis towards them. Parodying Neumann's call to "beat

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fascists wherever you meet them", Goebbels demanded from the storm troopers "to beat the revolutionary national socialists wherever they exist".

The failed assassination attempt on Strasser and Rudolf Röhm, the bloody massacre in Albertsdorf showed that the "Combat Commonwealth" urgently needed forces and means to protect their meetings from the raids of the Nazi stormtroopers. The KGRNS paramilitary group, the Combat Community, was not large enough to cope with this task. In addition, his cells were scattered throughout Germany, which made it difficult to create a mobile and capable security service. As a result, Strasser was simply forced to make an alliance with organizations · that had their own paramilitary units that were able to repulse the SA. First of all, the Strasserians tried to find potential "siloviks" among the "Bündish" – youth organizations. But fate still assigned a decisive role to the communists.

The KKE attached exceptional importance to the withdrawal of the Strasser group from the NSDAP. Still would! The communists saw this as the beginning of the disintegration of "national fascism". The above analysis of the Comintern clearly overestimated the danger posed by the Strasserians. It is unlikely that the "Combat Community" could split the masses. The German communists were more

prudent and insightful. Apparently, that is why they were in no hurry to expose the members of Strasser's group as political provocateurs. And even more so, they were not going to launch an ideological struggle against them - there were more dangerous opponents. I don't think of such a position.

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were in the Comintern. Back in early July 1930, the executive committee of the KGRNS ordered to establish contacts not only with related groups, but also with the communists. As a rule, the revolutionary National Socialists invited representatives of the CIT to all their events and meetings. Moreover, each member of the "Combat Community" received a secret order to attend the events of "ideological opponents", which, as it turned out, included the communists. There, the revolutionary National Socialists were to agitate for "German socialism", for the socialization of the economy and society, for the creation of an "alliance of the oppressed", to invite all German revolutionaries to cooperation.

But the alliance with the KKE quickly cracked. The initiative to boycott the elections of September 14, 1930 was severely criticized by the KKE. It was this that became the reason for the disruption by the communists of the meeting of the Strasserians in Neukölln. This meeting was devoted to the problem of non-participation in the elections to the Reichstag. The National-Bolshevik crisis of September 1930 showed Otto Strasser how dangerous it was to get close to the left forces. It was then that he realized the need for his own original ideology, fundamentally different from the communist and Hitlerite ones. Between October 1930 and May 1931, contacts between the KGRNS took place at three different levels.

The theoretical analysis of philosophical and political Marxism approved the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" in an unambiguous rejection of such a model of thinking. At the leadership level. organization and its subdivisions organized joint

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meetings, discussions, at which ideological views were compared, and further ways of development of both organizations were discussed. Both communists and revolutionary national socialists tried to find mutual understanding. But at the level of the rank and file, there was a completely different political reality. To avoid collapse, the executive committee of the KGRNS was forced to sanction the participation of its local groups in mass events of other parties and unions. Conducting a global analysis of Marxism, the Strasserian circle tried to demonstrate to everyone the originality of its own ideology. For Strasser, Marxism, unlike Hitler, did not have a specific Jewish character. For Otto, he was not at all "an invention of the Jew Marx." He saw in it a comprehensively developed philosophy, born in the times of aggressive capitalism and formed on the basis of an analysis of the then social and economic contradictions. Strasser recognized the objective validity of Marxist thinking in general and Lenin's analysis of imperialism in particular. But at the level of philosophical ideas, he preferred to distance himself from Marxism. Marxism for him was a product of the liberal era. According to Strasser, a lot of things testified to such a relationship: the goals, methods and the very structure of Marxism.

Strasser believed that the mistake of Marx and the Marxist-Leninists was that they wanted to explain the historical development of mankind with the help of production relations and

class struggle. Although these phenomena were typical only for the era of capitalism. Dictatorship of the proletariat,

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proletarian internationalism and utopian communism did not suit Germany at all. They could completely distort and mutilate the spiritual, social and economic structure of German society. But capitalism was to be replaced not by communism, but by German socialism. The place of the class struggle was to be occupied by the people's community. And internationalism was to be replaced by revolutionary nationalism. |

Marxist economic theory remained for Strasser only a tool for understanding history. Philosophical Marxism and party communism were to perish along with the death throes of liberalism. The "military commonwealth" as the bearer of the new ideology was supposed to bring the "good news" to the Marxist masses. But not in order to stab in the back, but for every communist to start preparing for the German revolution. This was supposed to free people from the dogmatism of the communist ideology. The leadership of the KGRNS very much hoped that the communist party leadership would abandon its "anti-socialist" position and would contribute to the creation of a "united socialist front", which would provide unlimited support to the "Combat Commonwealth". Moreover, Strasser assigned the KGRNS the role of a political catalyst, which, bypassing all party structures, was supposed to provoke revolutionary actions among the masses.

'(On the one hand, Strasser dreamed of a well-organized mass action, on the other, he dreamed of a poorly understood Leninist model of revolution.

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to train cadres ("non-commissioned officers") for the last stage of the revolutionary process. The masses themselves were not supposed to play a significant role - they were not yet ready to realize their national destiny, expressed by Meller van den Broek in the ideas of revolutionary conservatism.

The contradictions within the GRNC have never been shown to the general public. Perhaps that is why the KKE's promises of joint activities in a number of areas remained in force for a long time. Similar statements could be heard in the ranks of the revolutionary National Socialists. Strasser himself spoke about this. This was discussed by the communists Münzenberg and Wittfogel, who were trying to convince the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" of their rightness. Strasser, Mossakovsky, Buchrucker had no illusions about the durability of cooperation with the communists. But they could not have imagined that the conflict would come so quickly. On January 6, 1931, Münzenberg called the Combat Commonwealth a "semi-fascist organization." Then the conflict could hardly be hushed up. Otto Strasser did not dare to go into open confrontation with the communists. At that time, the left wing of the "Commonwealth" was stronger than ever, and a number of local organizations, for example in Halle and Braunschweig, were actually controlled from the KKE. Strasser believed that this state of affairs could not last forever - he had to form a "united front", which would completely undermine the influence of the communists in the revolutionary camp.

But soon he found himself in a very difficult situation - the "Union against Fascism" (ANTIFA) was created by leftist forces. New post organization

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The aim was to unite the working class and all anti-fascists, regardless of their class origin. Now, in order to preserve the unity of the organization, Strasser had to

support ANTIFA. On January 25, 1931, he published a call for anti-fascist unity in The German Revolution: "Every German socialist, every German nationalist, every German who adheres to the idea of "Völkisch" must clearly realize that fascism is the last pulp of capitalist, imperialism. the static, liberal system will once again strengthen the failure of domination over the German people. The Combat Commonwealth called for a united anti-fascist front to fight against the NSDAP, which "symbolized the fascist reaction", which was supported by conservative semi-fascist organizations: Steel Helmet, Landbund, economic parties. Strasser, who had long dreamed of uniting all of Hitler's opponents, was outstripped. The CIRNS leader immediately recognized the danger posed by ANTIFA. His left supporters could have gone over to the other camp. Now cooperation was extremely cautious. However, for many revolutionary National Socialists, such cooperation was a matter of course. The only way to ensure the safety of the members of the KGRNS, who had already felt in their own skin what terror from the Nazi assault squads was, was seen by them in cooperation with the military leadership of ANTIFA.

But Strasser did not intend to give up political positions. The ANTIFA Congress, which took place on February 15, 1931 in Cologne, gave Strasser

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strongly

waters to accuse the leadership of this organization of imitating a united socialist front. The conflict did not have time to flare up, as the Cologne leader of the KGRNS Fragenberg decided to submit to the leadership of ANTIFA. It is noteworthy that both the public and Strasser himself learned this news from the communist press. The organization is on the brink again. split. To avoid a new crisis, Strasser took back his words and continued to cooperate with ANTIFA. However, he still dismissed Fragenberg from his post - for abuse of authority and arbitrariness.

The case with Fragenberg did not go unnoticed. Strasser was very annoyed by the success of the communists. He poured out his annoyance in one of the articles. "The fight against fascism, based on our socialist pain, is a matter of course. But at first it must proceed independently of party and armed organizations." ANTIFA, in his opinion, could not activate all anti-capitalist forces, since "from the moment of its inception it was a purely communist union." Turning into a party clique, he could destroy the undertakings of the "Combat Commonwealth". Somewhat later, the problem of relations between the "Combat Commonwealth" and ANTIFA became more than topical - the Berlin leadership of the "Commonwealth" ceased to control the situation in Halle and the Ruhr region. Now R. Shapke decided to attack the communists. In his article, which was published in February 1931, he called the "People's Congress Against Fascism" held in Berlin a comedy. In those days, Rote Fahne covered the activities of this event in detail,

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which was attended by 2100 people. Of these, 629 were members of the KKE, 11 were communist youth. 24 members of the congress were social democrats. The main majority - 1496 people - were non-partisans. Schapke believed that these people were communists in disguise, admitted to the congress on the orders of Molotov and Stalin. "Unfortunately, this event was not a people's congress at which all groups of the German working class were supposed to be represented. It was the KKE congress against fascism."

Demanding the creation of a "united front of all socialists against the mortal enemy - fascism", the "Combat Commonwealth" categorically refused to follow "one-sided party methods

KPI". The United Front was supposed to provide a political alternative to the true revolutionaries who remained in the SA.

Shapke expressed a similar position at the "Hamburg congress against fascism", in which the local organization of the "Combat Commonwealth" took an active part. The article "The United Front Against Fascism" published in the German Revolution stated that the KKE was engaged in exclusively demagoguery. Such resolute statements once again emphasized that the leadership of the KGRNS was not able to control the situation in their own organization. By May 1951, Strasser had finally lost control over numerous organizations of the "Combat Commonwealth". Many of them did not hesitate to join ANTIFA. This was observed everywhere in Saxony, Halle, Hamburg. It was not just an organizational crisis. At KGRNS

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A new ideological crisis was brewing — most of the uncontrolled revolutionary National Socialists were ready to recognize proletarian internationalism, which in no way corresponded to Strasser's political constructions. Proletarian internationalism actually meant a complete rejection of the 14 Theses of the German Revolution. The rank-and-file members of the KGRNS did not even think of carrying out the decisions made at the First Imperial Congress. In order to save what was still possible to save, Strasser decided to approve cooperation with ANTIFA. But it was only a futile attempt to avoid a split, which actually became inevitable.

A new danger hung over the "Combat Commonwealth" when Lieutenant R. Scheringer moved from the NSDAP to the Communist Party. This man in 1950 became perhaps the most famous officer. At first, he was the main defendant in the case of the creation of a Nazi party organization in the ranks of the Reichswehr (political activity in the army was strictly prohibited). The government decided to arrange a show trial of Nazi officers. At the trial, Hitler not only did not support the young officer, but actually betrayed him. Disillusioned with National Socialism, Scheringer made friends in prison with left-wing political prisoners. In retaliation for the Führer's betrayal, he defiantly left the NSDAP and joined the Communist Party. "Slam the door" sounded throughout Europe. |

Under these conditions, the executive committee of the "Combat Commonwealth" decided to repeat the success that was achieved in July 1930. The KGRNS managed to break out of the communist encirclement only thanks to an alliance with

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revolutionary stormtroopers of Walter Stennes. But more on that later.

The National-Bolshevik crisis, steadily deteriorating relations with ANTIFA clearly showed how significant the conflict between the left wing and the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" was. Local groups associated with ANTIFA and ideological-tactical rapprochement with the communists became the reasons for the massive exodus of active members from the CGRN. Many of them could not resist the temptation to join a mass political organization, which in this case was the KKE. The "third way" program was losing its credibility.

Strasser refused to "conquer the masses" in the Hitlerian manner. But, on the other hand, he could not but understand that the achievement of political success depended, among other things, on the size of his organization. The goal he set, "to create a commonwealth of fighters, a community of 20-25 thousand close-knit people who will become a school for non-commissioned officers of the German Revolution," forced the "Combat Commonwealth" to look for social groups that are most receptive to ideology.

revolutionary National Socialism. For example, in order to attract the rural population into their ranks, the Strasserians specially adapted their ideas to rural conditions. The executive committee of the KGRNS decided to use not only the energy of the peasantry, but also the potential of youth organizations, which at that time was not appreciated by either the communists or the Nazis. When the revolutionary National Socialists set out to win these social strata over to their side, their movement

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For the first time, the Union had the opportunity to form a strong extra-parliamentary opposition. Strong enough to declare itself as a third force capable of competing with the Nazis and communists. If the agitation of the peasantry was an essential moment in the activities of the revolutionary National Socialists throughout the entire period of the legal existence of their organization, then communication with the youth unions was uneven. Let's consider this situation in more detail. Orientation towards the "Bündish" - youth organizations was a temporary tactic, which exhausted itself already in July 1931.

The executive committee of the "Combat Commonwealth" did not set out to unite under its leadership all the existing "bundiche" groups. The Strasserians only wanted to eliminate their organizational heterogeneity and give this youth movement a more pronounced political connotation. In order to win over the youth, the KGRNS had to establish itself as the highest ideological authority. But after 10 months of hard work, the attempt to tame the youth movement ended in failure. The only result of this painstaking work was the birth of an ideological program addressed to the leaders of the youth groups of the "Combat Commonwealth".

Even at the First Imperial Congress, it was decided to transfer to youth organizations the most significant materials of the National Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Youth. At that time, the youth wing of the Commonwealth was a tiny organization, hardly more than

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30 people, mostly from the Hitler Youth. How sensitive Strasser was to the youth is shown by one fact. Even in difficult times, when the "Combat Commonwealth" had to abandon the publication of many newspapers, a 4-page bulletin "We are young" was published weekly. Initially, it was published as an independent publication, and then turned into a supplement to the newspaper "The German Revolution". Between October 1930 and July 1931, 17 issues of this edition appeared. On reading We Are Young, one would discover that this militant leaflet was essentially no different from other newspapers of the revolutionary National Socialists, with the exception that all articles in it were specially revised for young people.

The "National Socialist Worker and Peasant Youth" was perceived by Strasser as a youth union located at the "epicenter of life", which was supposed to develop a new style of behavior among young people, a new spirituality, a new understanding of society. The collaboration between the Strasserians and the youth Bundische was supposed to give "an impulse for renewal" on both sides. This impulse was to rid the youth movement of the fascist, bourgeois and Marxist heritage. After the German Revolution and the advent of socialism, this movement was to become the revolutionary vanguard of the gigantic movement of all young Germans, which was to take place under the banner of the Third Reich.

In principle, the "new youth ideology" of the "Combat Commonwealth" was not much different from the ideas that they tried to attract young people to

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nationalists, racists and völkische groups. An attempt to rigidly impose their own ideology led to the fact that the KGRNS could not at all gain a foothold in the environment of the "jundiche organizations. The attempt to create a united front of youth organizations that would resolutely oppose the introduction of labor service also ended in failure! It was not about the idea, but about the fact that each youth organization wanted to hold its own protest action on this issue. The crisis of the "Combat Commonwealth", which erupted in August 1931, actually destroyed the youth organization of the KGRNS. Even after an alliance with the revolutionary stormtroopers, it could not count hundreds of members.

In February 1931, the leader of the youth group, Artur Grosse, left the Combat Commonwealth and joined the Communists. This event preceded further major setbacks from which the "Combat Commonwealth" was never able to fully recover.

In the program documents of the "Combat Commonwealth" (call of July 4, 1930, "14 Theses of the German Revolution") we will not find a single mention of the class struggle. In its activities, the CGRNC intended to rely on the entire nation. The class struggle was one of the main threats to the garrison.

1 Labor service was supposed to attract unemployed youth to socially useful activities (repairing streets, building dams, etc.). This project was supposed to reduce unemployment in the country. Although the "bundish" youth proclaimed "service to the nation", in this situation they sharply opposed the introduction of labor service. The "Bundische" organizations declared that this was yet another deception of the capitalist system and refused to revive the capitalist country.

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the monastic "people's community". Throughout many discussions between the KKE and the "Combat Commonwealth", all the contradictions between these two organizations ultimately came down to the concept of "class struggle". The question was far from idle. Given the steadily deteriorating economic situation in the country, it acquired almost a cornerstone. On October 8-9, 1930, representatives of large-scale industry unanimously supported the program for improving the economy proposed by Brüning. A few days before, it was approved by the Reich President Hindenburg himself. The recovery was to come from cuts in funding for public works and cuts in private sector wages. On October 12, the program entered into force. Almost immediately, the wages of workers in heavy industry fell by 89%. As early as October 14, the Berlin metal workers went on strike. A month later, the conciliation commission was able to find a compromise, and real wages fell by only 3%.

On December 1, 1930, Brüning issued an emergency decree "On saving the economy and the budget", according to which the salaries of state employees were reduced by 6%. At the same time, taxes increased by 5%. On December 10, the Ruhr Employers' Union demanded the approval of the government for a 12% reduction in wages. A strike immediately broke out here.

"Combat Commonwealth" could not remain aloof from these events. It first supported the strike in Saxony, and then all the strikes that broke out. And here Strasser made another mistake: instead of putting forward specific political

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and economic demands, he preferred to confine himself to demagogic slogans. In particular, he demanded to establish the maximum salary in the country. in the amount of 1000 marks. In addition, he advocated a reduction in the salaries of parliamentarians and the publication of the names of those who profited from the implementation of the Young Plan. He hoped that these demands would lead the workers into the camp of the revolutionary National Socialists.

The next day, the Combat Commonwealth decided to expand its demands. It insisted on a 7-hour working day (which was to be established without a reduction in wages), the abolition of any new taxes, and a pension of 500 marks. But most importantly, Strasser insisted on a "general socialist strike directed against the system." For the defeat of the strike, Strasser made responsible the "Jesuit dictatorship of Brüning", the traitor Hitler, and the trade union bureaucracy, which was in the service of the corrupt social democracy. After calls for the creation of a united socialist front did not find a response, Strasser and Schapke stopped using such concepts as a political strike, exploiters, and class struggle altogether. In addition, the situation in the country was not conducive to a massive strike movement. In response to the mass strikes, employers and industrialists carried out even more significant wage cuts. Under these conditions, trade unions became an indispensable organization.

So where did Strasser get his idea about the general political strike from? This thesis was first voiced in an article by Christian Klee "National-More

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vizm", published on October 1, 1930 in the "Napional Socialist Letters". And already on January 11, 1931, the German Revolution published a call for solidarity with the workers of the Ruhr, which was supplemented by the already traditional demand for the creation of a "united socialist front". However, although Strasser showed solidarity with the Ruhr workers, he did not believe in their victory. Their struggle was of an economic nature, was isolated and had no political leadership. The industrialists preferred to settle differences with the workers individually, bypassing the trade unions. By doing so, Strasser believed, they isolated the strikers from common labor interests.

It was vital for the capitalists to present this struggle in the press under their control as purely economic misunderstandings between two equal partners - workers and employers. Such tactics split off from the struggling workers such sections as the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. The "divide and conquer" tactic justified itself - the strikes began to subside. Strasser saw the only chance of the working people only in the intention to give the strike a general political character. If the workers could move from purely economic demands to total criticism of the system, they would certainly rally with the peasants and the middle strata. This alliance was supposed to be the key to victory over capitalism. Putting forward this thesis, Strasser, as it were, criticized the KKE, which called for a struggle of class against class. The workers could only win if there was national solidarity. The narrow class struggle doomed them to defeat.

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In December 1930, the Communist Party began to adopt new tactics. Now Brüning and his emergency decrees have become the main enemy. As if rejecting Strasser's criticism, the communists headed for a "fighting alliance" of the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Instead of calling for

During the class struggle, the communists raised the slogan of "a nationwide people's revolution against the fascist dictatorship of Brüning" to the banner. After some thought, Strasser joined this call. In the new slogan, he saw not only a tactical tool, but a way through which it was possible to put an end to class thinking and ideas about the class struggle. The latter for him was just an outdated concept from the Marxist ideological clip. German capitalism actually destroyed all classes. He created a primitive bipolar socio-political reality. At one extreme were the exploiters, at the other, the oppressed. It was the oppressed who, according to Strasser, made up 97% of the entire German people.

So, since almost the entire German people fell into the category of the oppressed, the collapse of the capitalist system in Germany was inevitable. "We proceed from the premise that the anti-capitalist front represents the devilish people of Pems, to whom the class domination of capitalism is opposed... In reality, it is capitalism that calls for class struggle. The goal of socialism is the people's community.' According to Strasser's views, the socialist revolution could only be victorious under conditions of nationwide solidarity. The slogans of the class struggle only blinded the revolutionaries.

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As a result, the leader of the KGRNS came to the conclusion: the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing but a tool of capitalism. Unsuspecting communists overnight turned into accomplices of the system and servants of capitalism. Strasser now resorted again to his favorite anti-Marxist arguments. By and large, they were limited to the proclamation of revolutionary National Socialism as the only political trend that could find a way out of the crisis. Strasser repeated similar ideas in his article "Toward a Strike in the Ruhr: Fundamentals and Tactical Remarks." He argued that Brüning's decrees were a completely natural step, since the government decided to embark on the path of open fascism and establish the dictatorship of capital. Capitalism could only be destroyed if the German people were substantially impoverished. Isn't it, reminds Lenin's thesis: "The worse, the better"? The workers were not to scatter their forces for a momentary economic struggle, but to accumulate them for a decisive attack on the system. The goal of the revolutionary and National Socialist movements was to be directed against the party selfishness of the NSDAP, the KPD and the trade unions.

The notorious United Front, which was a necessary condition for a general political strike, 'had to sweep away the party hierarchy, becoming 'the strongest and most effective means of the international liberation struggle'. This front, of course, could not completely destroy capitalism, but it would open the way to the creation of a revolutionary parliament that would embody all anti-capitalist aspirations. It is noteworthy that in this

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Parliament Strasser assigned a seat to the NSDAP. But on one condition: the Nazis had to be reborn. The Hitler Party was obliged to renew itself, breaking off all relations with the German People's National Party and leaving the coalition governments in Thuringia and Saxony.

The revolutionary parliament was supposed to abolish the capitalist system and represent the interests of the oppressed people. Needless to say, he had to abandon the implementation of Young's plan and destroy the Versailles system. Again it is clear that Strasser was an enthusiastic dreamer. He drew not a political perspective, but a utopia that could not actually be realized. What was worth only one of the passages: "The alliance between the KKE, the NSDAP, the revolutionary trade unions, the revolutionary SA must be based on the universal love that reigns between brothers, 6 of whom the blood of one people flows."

After the strike was defeated, references to this marvelous utopia quickly disappeared from the pages of the newspapers of the Combat Society. In April 1931, Strasser began to express more viable ideas. Now he set a course for an alliance with the revolutionary stormtroopers and paramilitary units of the national revolutionaries. He called on the national opposition to armed struggle. Such sharp fluctuations were another confirmation that the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" was simply not able to clearly formulate its political goals. In an effort to play at least some role in the political life of Germany, Strasser and his associates, without hesitation, were

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ready to adjust the ideology and tactics of their organization to the new conditions. As a result, they trailed at the tail of political events.

Such promiscuity resulted in conflicts between supporters of one line or another, which was supposed to be followed by the CGRNC. No one knew how the notorious "German Revolution" was supposed to start. The press of the "Combat Commonwealth" has turned into a cocktail of political dogmatism and ideological vacillations. The publications lost their internal logic, they were incoherent and untimely. Strasser could not help but see that the political inconsistency threatened the very existence of the Combat Commonwealth. But before the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" finally collapsed, it was destined to experience another grandiose success. It was brought to Strasser by the rebellious Berlin storm troopers of Walter Stennes.

Part 111

"REBELLION" IN SA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Chapter 1

REVOLUTIONARY SA

The mutiny of the Berlin stormtroopers, which took place in June 1931, influenced not only the entire further development of the "Combat Commonwealth", but also its ideological principles. In order to fully appreciate the significance of this event, we will try to understand the relationship between the NSDAP and its SA, the assault detachments. It was always problematic for the Munich leadership to determine what place the SA occupied in the party structure. It was even more difficult to answer the question: what role were the stormtroopers supposed to play after the Nazis came to power? In 1930, Hitler and the leadership of the party were forced to take a number of decisive measures. They eliminated the remnants of Strasser's influence in the NSDAP by resolutely renouncing revolutionary socialism. Hitler now insisted on principle on the legal path

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Y z for coming to power. He loudly declared this during the trial of the Reichswehr.

Meanwhile, in August 1930, the NSDAP was in the cycle of fighting for seats in the Reichstag. It was very important for Hitler to come to power legally. To do this, he was going to mobilize the entire party and assault squads. The SA, organized in a military manner, as a rule, consisted of people "ready for anything. They were at the "front line" of campaign events and propaganda actions. Stormtroopers were the main instigators of street skirmishes with communists and social democrats. Losing comrades on a daily basis, receiving mutilations and wounds in street brawls, the stormtroopers spoke of "bleeding" as a guarantee of political victory. They saw the only way to victory in an armed revolution or putsch. In those days, the informal leader of the assault squads, Walter Stennes, wrote: "At the meeting in the Sports Palace, burning passions raged, the readiness to go to the barricades and start the German revolution was expressed." Such sentiments began to reign in the SA long before the September 1930 elections. The first time they came out was in 1923, when Hitler started

prepare a putsch. After the revival of the party, several years passed, when the attack aircraft again began to demand active action. Passions began to heat up somewhere in 1927. War was demanded not only by ordinary attack aircraft, but also by their leaders, including Walter Stennes.

Who was this invisible leader of the radical stormtroopers? Walter Stennes was born in 1895 in the Westphalian town of Fursterberg. In the battles of the First World War, he, a young officer of the German su

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troopers, showed exceptional courage and was awarded several orders. At the front, Stennes became friends with a pilot from the squadron of Baron Richthofen, Oberleutnant Hermann Gerint, the future Nazi number two. A career officer, one of the best graduates of the cadet school, after the First World War he joined the volunteer corps. As part of the Freikorps, Haxtau fought in the Ruhr area. In September 1919 he headed the eighth hundred of the secret Berlin police. There he was destined to play a very strange role. On October 3, 1930, the newspaper Vorwärts reported that from the members of his hundred, he formed a secret organization called the People of the Ring, which set itself the goal of destroying the Weimar Republic and establishing national order. In 1920, he and his supporters took an active part in the Kapp putsch, after the defeat of which he managed to continue his service in the secret police. In July 1920, he even received a promotion - he was awarded the rank of lieutenant. Now he served in the internal service of the secret police. But his career was cut short in 1922, when he left his service for unknown reasons. A year later, we can see him as commander of the Fourth Poaching Brigade of the Black Reichswehr. In the autumn of the same year, together with Major Buhruker, he unsuccessfully tried to organize an armed uprising. In 1926, Walter Stennes joined the Steel Helmet, where he established contacts with the Nazis. From them he received a more tempting offer and in the spring of 1928 he headed the Berlin assault detachments. A year later he became acting

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duties of the commander of the SA in the north and east of Germany.

For him, the assault squads were "the spearhead of the party." They were not only collected in a military manner, but also played a crucial role in campaign activities, guarding rallies and meetings. They were simply indispensable in street skirmishes. Stennes expected that the stormtroopers should receive significant funds from the leadership of the party, and that the stormtroopers themselves had the right to claim the role of the elite of the party, its vanguard. For him, the SA was the main force of the party. The revolutionary might of these political soldiers was bound to crush bourgeois society at a certain moment.

Objecting and protesting against the decisions of the Munich leadership, Walter Stennes attracted people to him like a magnet. But in Munich, they believed that the stormtroopers were a blind tool that had to obey orders. In July 1930, hostility between the party leadership and the SA, primarily the Berlin storm troopers, became an obvious phenomenon. The impetus for the escalation of the conflict was the financial issue. Contrary to popular belief, uniform poverty reigned in the SA. The salaries of the stormtroopers were extremely irregular, and the "folk kitchens" of the SA no longer attracted the unemployed who wanted to join Hitler's "brown army". Discontent began to grow by leaps and bounds when rumors reached Berlin that the Munich leadership had managed to acquire mansions. When the Berlin storm troopers made requests to the party leadership, they received a turn from the gate. Gugeschaffführer Wilke, in charge of

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interaction with the SA in the German capital, did not even want to listen to them. He did not hide the fact that he looked at the attack aircraft as "infantry from the SA." Walter Stennes, who did not want to put up with this state of affairs, decided to use this as an excuse to not obey a single order from Munich. He decided that he himself was able to ensure the financial independence of the assault troops. There was another reason why he decided to aggravate relations with the party leadership. However, he did not advertise it. Stennes hoped to become a member of the Reichstag, where he was going to get on the electoral lists of the Nazi Party. Not getting what he expected, he took a course on non-parliamentary methods of struggle. In his speeches, he justified this as follows: "The gigantic task of freeing the people cannot be solved by the current methods of parliamentary democracy." Walter Stennes decided to act. |

After a month of lively discussions, the Berlin storm troopers decided to send a delegation to Hitler in Munich. But they refused to accept her. Moreover, immediately after the unsuccessful visit to the Führer in Berlin, the "Order of obedience" came. In Berlin, such behavior was perceived, if not as a provocation, then at least as an insult. On August 27, the day the delegation returned from Munich, Walter Schuttenes convened an extraordinary meeting of the leadership of the SA, at which it was decided that the stormtroopers would stop attending any propaganda actions, guarding meetings, as well as following orders from Munich. The Berlin SA also demanded that Hitler remove Wilke from his post and include at least two storm troopers in the electoral list of the party.

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In the meantime, only a couple of weeks remained before the elections to the Reichstag, and such a demarche could paralyze all Nazi propaganda. Knowing nothing about the meeting, Goebbels planned a major event for 29 August 1930 at the Berlin Sports Palace. The leadership of the SA decided in this way to demonstrate their determination. On the same day, it appointed a general meeting of the SA. In fact, this meant that the Sports Palace would have been left without protection. Fearing an attack by the Communists, Goebbels, at his own peril and risk, decided to start negotiations with Walter Stennes. In an ultimatum form, he demanded that a general meeting of the SA be held at the Sports Palace, since the attack aircraft should have been interested in demonstrating loyalty and devotion to the party.

But beautiful words had no effect. On August 30, a new meeting of the leaders of the Berlin SA took place. It was decided to take action and remove the Berlin party leadership. Without delay, several dozen stormtroopers went to the Berlin party office. There was a fierce skirmish with armed SS men who were on duty at the entrance. But the preponderance of forces was still on the side of Stennes. Goebbels was saved by the police, who arrived on an urgent call. Goebbels realized that he was in a situation with no way out, and decided to call Hitler to Berlin.

As German newspapers later reported, the phrase "rebellious SA from assault No. 9" became a household word. After the unsuccessful attack on the Berlin headquarters of the NSDAP, they declared: "We are not in

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We agree with the Communists on all issues, but in the elections we will give our votes to the KKE, because it is truly a workers' party." It would seem that this first "mutiny" in the SA had an obvious Strasserian connotation. After all, it was Strasser who wanted to split the revolutionary SA from the corrupt Hitlerite party. But the rebel storm troopers did not mention revolutionary National Socialism at all. Nor did they speak of Strasser. In general, it is doubtful that the leader of the "Combat Commonwealth" had anything to do with the first rebellion of the stormtroopers. At that time, only a couple of dozen people transferred from the SA to the KGRNS.

But back to Berlin. Hitler, who arrived there, flatly refused to meet with Stennes and wanted to personally visit the local SA groups. He wanted to see for himself the extent of the stormtroopers' dissatisfaction. After getting acquainted with ordinary stormtroopers, Hitler invited the leaders of the SA, who did not support the "mutiny" of Stennes and remained loyal to the Fuhrer. To them, Hitler declared his desire to get rid of instigators. On September 1, he summoned Stennes. Now the Fuhrer has changed tactics. He wanted to convene a council of all SA leaders that evening.

In front of the assembled two thousand leaders of the SA, Hitler resolutely announced that from now on he was going to lead both the assault detachments and the security units (SS). He offered panegyrics to the storm troopers, not forgetting to emphasize the need to abandon the revolutionary method of coming to power. To make an even greater impression on the audience, he announced the resignation of the chief of staff of the SA von Pfeffer, who, in fairness, was going to

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leave this post. Hitler urged the audience to be loyal and obedient. Almost immediately, the cash desk of the Berlin SA received money. Many in those days perceived this as a victory for W. Stennes.

The first rebellion was finally extinguished on 4 September. It seemed that calm reigned in the Berlin SA. But the incident itself made me think. As a contemporary wrote: "The September mutiny was the first sign that the SA. were not going to share the party springboard with ambitious politicians." In Munich, too, did not forget about this incident. Already in September, Hitler became aware that discontent among the Berlin stormtroopers continued to grow. Then he decided to get rid of the revolutionary elements. The hard-won compromise was again under threat. The conflict, of course, was hushed up, but it remained unresolved. This means that at any moment it could flare up with renewed vigor. It was then that Hitler decided to summon his old colleague Ernst Röhm from Bolivia.

The euphoria from the victory achieved in September 1930 for some time reduced the discontent in the SA. After the September crisis, Stennes turned out to be the most authoritative person in the Berlin organization of the NSDAP. He was able to obtain from the political leadership not only financial concessions, but also the resignation of von Pfeffer, a very dubious person who briefly headed the SA. However, Hitler was not going to make Stennes the new head of the storm troopers. A counterweight to the Berlin rebel was to be E. Rehm, who was appointed the newly minted chief of the SA headquarters. Rehm had to reorganize the management of the assault squads and

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neutralize "subversive elements" in northern Germany. On January 1, 1931, Röhm addressed the storm troopers: "In 1931 we will be able to see a further breakthrough towards the inevitable success of our movement, the success of Germany. The hour of victory is near. But his approach will be beaten not only by the SA, but also by solidarity, unconditional devotion and fidelity to the chosen path. Comrades, I'm getting better, bam, I appreciate your kindness, but we must also justify the Fuhrer's trust placed in us.

Rehm's appointment as SA chief shocked many stormtroopers. Back in 1923, a campaign was unleashed against him, during which many opponents of Hitler characterized Röhm as an imbecile homosexual. Stormtroopers could hardly obey a man who had such a tarnished reputation. They considered him a vile little man. He was not worthy to get into the "new Germany". By February 1931, the rumors circulating in the SA had reached such a level that Hitler himself was forced to intervene. But he flatly refused to discuss this issue, as "it was a waste of time." In his opinion, the SA are people gathered for a specific political purpose, and "not an institution for the education of pious

girls." "Private life cannot be a subject of discussion when we face other tasks," he summed up his speech. Outwardly, it seemed that Stennes was not involved in the criticism that was heard against Rem. He was wary of openly attacking his new superiors. But he could not miss the chance not to take advantage of the general discontent in order to secure his position as an undeniable

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stormtrooper leader. From February to April 1931, he published a series of articles in Goebbels' *Angrif*, in which he tried to present himself not just as a hero of a fighting nationalist socialism, but as a politician and even a thinker.

The first article appeared on February 3, 1931. It was called "Soldiers Make Politics. Public Opinion and the Political Soldier". Its author was Walter Jahn, a stormtrooper devoted to Stennes. Then this publication developed into a series of articles "Soldiers make politics", which was a collection of memoirs, short notes that covered the period 1920-1930. The second article appeared on 19 February. It described the military exploits of Stennes in the autumn of 1918. It ended with the words of the former subordinate leader of the Berlin stormtroopers: "We have no doubt that Oberleutnant Stennes will lead the SA to victory, as they fight together for the German people, for the German workers, against a system built on lies". The first two articles described Stennes as a military leader, a military hero, the third, which appeared on February 26, told about his struggle with the "Reds" and the "treacherous Versailles system." Further publications told in detail about his political fate.

With these articles, Stennes wanted to show everyone that, according to the Führer principle, which was simply necessary for achieving political success, he was the only leader of the SA. Thanks to his military and political experience, only he alone could raise stormtroopers to revolt against the government. Just one fact, that the main opposition

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ner published these articles in a newspaper published by Goebbels, says how strong his position in Berlin was. Goebbels chose to indirectly oppose Hitler by supporting the "instigator".

Meanwhile, the financial situation in the SA has not changed radically. The stormtroopers began to listen more attentively to the revolutionary National Socialists, voices began to be heard supporting revolutionary National Socialism. Hitler knew about this. That is why, on February 17, he spoke about "probation officers who wormed their way into the ranks of the NSDAP in order to incite the SA to insane actions that could end in the persecution of the entire party." The answer to this speech was a letter from Stennes addressed to E. Röhm. In it, Stennes openly criticized the Munich leadership, and two points stood out: the position of the SA in the party and the inadmissibility of a legal coming to power. It is noteworthy that this letter was written on the letterhead of the SA chief. Stennes wanted to show who the masses of stormtroopers were behind.

In his letter, Stennes indicated the reasons that caused unrest in the ranks of the stormtroopers. As such, he called "the disastrous financial situation and the unfavorable political situation." In his opinion, the financial policy of the party acted as a catalyst for discontent among the soldiers and proletarians. He blamed these mistakes on Adolf Hitler's entourage, "consisting of indecisive people who

hour were not able to realize the true situation of the German people" and to see in what a deplorable state the SA were. According to Sten

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The catastrophic financial situation was only a consequence of the deterioration of the political climate in the NSDAP: "The political leadership saturated the revolutionary energy of the SA with a bourgeois-liberal spirit. It will break through measures that painfully touch the vital nerve of the assault squads. And if the SA was treated this way, is it worth expecting that such a leadership will be imbued with the misfortunes of the entire people? The political leadership is defrauding the nation's expectations by trying to turn the militant National Socialist movement into a party that is no different from the rest. A distinctive feature of the noba NSDAP is the bosses, who have taken warm places. In the past, the National Socialist movement strongly rejected the parliamentary methods and customs that have now become a matter of course for many party leaders."

Stennes reproached the party for effeminacy and venality, which led to a painful split in the NSDAP. "The erosion of the Party, its effeminacy, the departure of the most active fighters from the camp of the Communists is only a consequence of the unreasonable policy of the party's handicraft. The SA were good when they brought in political leaders 6 deputies and ministerial seats. We, who fought with weapons in 6 hands for the cause of our victory in 1918, 1920 and 1923, were deceived." The dates mentioned (the creation of volunteer corps, the Kapp and "beer" coups) unambiguously indicated the way Stennes was going to come to power. He described Rem and the Munich leadership as "the economy of the bosses who were about to throw off responsible control

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SA". He also recalled the tension that arose due to the arrogance of some Nazi politicians, who were very dismissive of the stormtroopers. He stated that the alliance between the proletarian storm troopers and the bourgeois party leadership had always been fragile and unreliable.

The criticism expressed by Stennes was an expression of the global contradictions that existed in the NSDAP regarding the methods and ways of "seizing power". The political leadership of the NSDAP had previously struggled with the desire for revolutionary adventure that Stennes displayed at every opportunity. In one press release, Goering stated that he "sees the SA built on a military model and filled with the spirit of the old army, of course, on the condition of complete and blind obedience to the Führer." As for Stennes, Goering stated that "it is a crime - after the 6 treatment movement has successfully fought for power for 10 years, now drive it underground. The NSDAP fully adheres to the legal path of coming to power." Göring denounced the new "march on Rome", because, in his opinion, the task of National Socialism was to win power not with bayonets, but with the help of ballots. Consequently, the SA was not to be used solely as a military organization.

A similar opinion was expressed by Adolf Hitler in one of his articles. In it, he settled scores with his opponents: "Captain Stennes [the Führer did not even know that the informal leader of the Ippurmoviks was a chief lieutenant], who decided to carry out a long-planned rebellion, was expelled

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me from the National Socialist Party. I had to do it. And from now on, without regard to possible consequences, I will purify the movement from elements that are not

are going to carry out my orders, given in the interests of the preservation of the party. Each Party Genosse has the right to disobey illegal orders, but is simply obliged to obey my orders. Otherwise, the existence of our movement does not make sense. There are more than enough parties in the country, 6 of which everyone is sick to decide what to do. And I created the National Socialist movement by no means in order "to replenish their number. The goal we are pursuing is gigantic and requires personal limits. Those who are not ready to go for it should leave our movement. Of all the people who are now hiding behind socialist phrases, I do not blame anyone who would dare to come out on my side. I hate liars and hypocrites who talk about socialism, while they themselves are totally alien to it! And when the work, first organized by me and my stormtroopers, began to bear fruit, Solomon-Bolsheviks and Solomon-socialists appeared. Partygenosse! I remember that I am not a lawyer for the National Socialist movement, I am its creator and leader. You should also remember this. And I, as the creator of the NSDAP and its leader. I feel my responsibility to future generations, I take care that our unspeakably large sacrifices are not wasted. I fight with fierce fanaticism against those who are going to destroy our cause. I see the National Socialist movement as the only possible future of the nation. And if propaganda is artillery

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riya of our struggle, then attack aircraft are its infantry. They must embody the ideal type of the National Socialist. They should be an example of loyalty to the Fuhrer. Anyone who is now inciting our National Socialist movement to declare massacre on the state is either a fool, or a criminal, or a provocateur!"

As you can see, Hitler repeatedly emphasized that the basic principle of the Nazis is unconditional obedience to the Fuhrer. The day after the appearance of this article, Hitler in the Völkisch Beobachter again returned to the brewing conflict. "The party does not pursue any subversive goals, waging a struggle only by legal means. Herr Shtennes, calling this activity "rag", "social-reactionary", "non-Prussian", threatens the whole movement. Hitler reacted so harshly and sharply, as he was informed that the stormtroopers had begun preparations for a coup d'état.

Stennes himself considered the SA as "a state within a state", and therefore he began to form his own "praetorian guard", which was supposed to carry out a national revolution. After yet another split occurred in the NSDAP, Stennes commented on his intentions in the article "Masks are thrown off", published in the newspaper Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. "I, as the chief of the northeastern assault detachments, quickly fell against the control of party structures. I counted on the independence of the SA from party functionaries, my own jurisdiction, independent management of finances, that is, I advocated what the leadership of the NSDAP should have done for a long time."

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But let's go back to the days when the conflict between Hitler and the stormtroopers flared up with renewed vigor. Two weeks after the appearance of the mentioned articles by Hitler, Stennes publicly stated that he did not rule out "social revolutionary pressure" on the party leadership from the side of the storm troopers. It was an open threat to the Munich leadership! "Munich sees in the revolution only a means to come to power, and therefore they completely abandon genuine National Socialist aspirations. The party decided to confine itself to parliamentary methods. But the SA must remain a cohesive fighting organization." Rejecting party patterns of "active politics", Stennes proclaimed the priority of violent action. He saw in the attack aircraft the very essence of the party, the driving force of the future revolution. With this statement, Stennes seemed to be saying: "Yes, all the accusations brought against me by the Munich

leadership, absolutely fair." Now he really began to pose a threat to Hitler. The Fuhrer decided to take action.

Meanwhile, on February 28, Reich President Hindenburg approved the Brüning Emergency Decree, which gave the Reich Chancellor exclusive powers. The government, at its own discretion, could ban meetings, dissolve subversive associations and anti-state unions, and stop the publication of objectionable newspapers. In the event of an uprising by the SA, or even just preparations for a putsch, the NSDAP could again, as in 1923, be banned.

On April 2, Angriff published Hitler's letter to Goebbels. In it, the Fuhrer clearly gave

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accept that Brüning will use any convenient pretext to remove the NSDAP from the political arena. "For almost a month, certain forces have been trying again and again to put an end to poor work. They are corrupting the Party by imposing in 6 different forms a spirit of dissension and peevish criticism. Considering the emergency decree, they pose a significant threat. If the intentions of these instigators come to fruition, then the enemies of the German liberation movement will have the opportunity not only to oppress, but also to dissolve our movement. That is why I have decided to wage a determined struggle by all available means against any attempt to destroy the National Socialist movement. I will purify the party of corrupting elements, wherever they may be. I will crush the hopes of the enemies of the people that National Socialism will disappear. Dr. Goebbels, I give you 6 hands the authority to clean up the party. You should not be tormented by doubts about the possible consequences.

In order to purge the Party as quickly as possible, Hitler called the Gauleiters of the Party to Weimar. Although the meeting was supposed to be held in absolute secrecy, the SA found out about it. On the night of April 1, the leaders of the rebel stormtroopers adopted a plan for decisive countermeasures. No one doubted that the Gauleiters had been brought together for only one purpose—to overthrow Stennes. The stormtroopers intended to remove the local party leadership from power. At the head of the Weimar party organization, it was planned to put Stennes' adjutant Walter Jahn. All attack aircraft

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and they did not want to hear about the resignation of everyone's favorite Stennes, but they could not work out a clear strategy.

On April 1, as expected, Hitler gathered in Weimar the most prominent functionaries of the NSDAP. He strongly demanded the resignation of Stennes. A telegram was sent to the leader of the revolutionary SA demanding to appear before the party meeting. Stennes bluntly refused to do so. Now his time has come.

All that day the Berlin storm troopers hesitated and behaved indecisively. Not surprisingly, the decision on the party coup was taken the day before in a terrible hurry. Stennes, meanwhile, published an article in which he claimed that Hitler would not dare to remove him. But this publication turned out to be a curiosity, since a few hours later all the newspapers reported the overthrow of Stennes. Probably Stennes did not believe that Hitler would dare to get rid of the de facto "brown army commander". Perhaps Stennes believed that the current situation would be settled by Goebbels, "converted to a new faith", and the party leadership would make another concession to the storm troopers. Or maybe Stennes was waiting for stormtroopers loyal to him from all over Germany to arrive in Berlin, and then he would start a revolution, overthrowing not only Hitler, but also the republican government. Now it is difficult to establish why he waited.

When a telegram came to Stennes from Weimar, he issued a leaflet saying that now it was not just a settlement from

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relations between the stormtroopers and the party leadership, but about the actual hunt for true national socialists, who were objectionable to the Munich bosses. It is they, the party bosses, who will be responsible for unleashing a fratricidal war. "The SA remained committed to duty," the leaflet said. "Now they are the conscience of the party, which demands a change in the program and the struggle for the old ideals of National Socialism. The absolute opposite is the conciliatory, conciliatory policy of Munich. The leaflet ended with the words: "Relying on the SA trusted to me, I take over the leadership of the Party 6 of East Prussia, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Brandenburg, Ostmark, Silesia, Magdeburg, Anhalt and the imperial capital of Berlin."

Standing at the head of a column of attack aircraft, Stennes participated in a fierce battle with the SS guards of the party headquarters and the editorial office of *Angrif*. Having lost several people wounded, the attack aircraft took control of these objects. Part of the editorial staff of *Angrif* immediately joined the rebellion. Now the revolutionary SA: could publish their own newspapers. The rebellion almost immediately swept the whole of Northern Germany. And here we could for the first time hear calls for revolutionary National Socialism. Pomerania became the center of such sentiments.

On April 2, in "*Angrif*" one could read that after an impartial analysis of the current situation, the "new leadership" of the party came to the conclusion that it was necessary to take a course towards revolutionary liberation.

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birth of Germany. The same course that was once curtailed by the reactionaries from Munich. Stennes spread his call throughout Germany: "Stormtroopers! Ask your conscience an interrogation: do we want a reactionary Rhomobian spirit in our detachments, or do we want revolutionary National Socialism, whose views meet the needs of spiritual freedom? On that day, Stennes wrote in his diary: "The ranks remain closed, and the banner of the German Revolution is high! 1 We are not on our way with Strasser's salon club. We are not on the road with the "Steel Helm" and the reaction. We will remain ready for the day when we lead the working people to the barricades to put an end to Jung's slavery and the system of capitalist exploitation. The old storm troopers know very well which barricades and against whom they will fight." Stennes became essentially the master of the situation in Berlin. He removed Goebbels from his post, who preferred to hide during the assault on the editorial office. Veteran SA Wetzel was appointed Gauleiter of Berlin. Stennes was no longer shy in his attacks. He proclaimed himself the new Fuhrer of the National Socialist movement and called on all stormtroopers to stand under his banner. The entries in the diary leave no doubt that the revolutionary SA adopted the ideology of revolutionary National Socialism. But Walter Stennes had no intention of sharing his power with Otto.

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1 Paraphrased line from the NSDAP party anthem, "Horst Wessel": "Raise the banners, close the ranks, minted in

stormtroopers are marching."

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Chapter 2

WALTER STENNES AND OTTO STRASSER

It is now very difficult to establish to what extent stormtroopers throughout the country supported Walter Stennes. One could find references to eight and even ten thousand members of the SA, who were mainly based in Berlin, Schleswig-Holstein, Pomerania. As shown by the list of those expelled from the party, which was published by Hitler on April 4, virtually the entire top of the North German SA was among the rebels. Stennes himself managed to control the publication of *Angrif* and the Berlin headquarters only until April 3rd. In the afternoon of that day, the editorial building, at the request of the Munich leadership, was seized by the police. All the barracks and headquarters of the rebel stormtroopers were attacked by law enforcement forces. After being cleared of rebels, they were placed at the disposal of the SS, which were reinforced by detachments sent from Bavaria. April 4 "Angrif" again came under the control of Goebbels, reporting the defeat of Stennes.

In the very first issue of this newspaper, Goebbels tried to calm the agitated public by significantly underestimating the size of the riot and its consequences. In numerous articles and notes, he tried to prove that the putsch was suppressed and that the Munich leadership was in complete control of the situation in the party. These publications could be conditionally divided into two groups: the first were devoted to the description of those who were expelled from the party. Measures were also outlined

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Family photo of the Strassers. Otto - far right, standing behind his otio

Otto Strasser leaves Otto Strasser at the end of the volunteer to the front of the First World War

Gregor Strasser, Otto's older brother

Revolution of 1918

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"Ehrhardt Brigade" captures Berlin during the Kapp putsch

Captain Hermann Erhardt

wolfgang

Kapp - one

of the organizers of the putsch of 1920

Hitler - a street speaker at the beginning of the formation of the NSDAP

Joseph Goebbels Walter Stennes, leader as Gauleiter of the revolutionary SA of Berlin

Ernst Rehm

Klaus Heim

Wilhelm Hamkens Bodo Uze

Beppo Römer, one of the members of the Thule Society, creator. mug "Breakthrough"

Joint meeting of Landsvolk and Black Front leadership

Demonstration "Landsvolk"

Von Salomon disrupts court hearing

in the case of Klaus Heim

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Ernst von Salomon

Franz Selde as Paul von Hindenburg, creator of the "Steel Reich President Helmet" of Germany

Major Buhrker

Reich Chancellor Franz Reich Chancellor Kurt von Papen Schleicher

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Reich Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher

The author of "The Warm Reich" Count Ernst von Arthur Meller Reventlow Van den Broek

ai Herbert Blank and Otto Strasser

Otto Strasser during "Building the German

creation of "Black Socialism" - front pamphlet by Otto Strasser,

which became the economic program of the "Black Front"

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Newspapers of the revolutionary National Socialists

Gregor Strasser after "reconciliation" with Hitler. Pictured from left to right: Heinrich Himmler, Rudolf Hess, Gregor Strasser, Adolf Hitler.

Richard Scheringer Franz Schauwecker

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Richard Scheringer in prison among political prisoners (marked with a cross in the photo)

Ernst Nikisch, leader of the Resistance

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taken to restore order. The second were ingenuous statements by rank-and-file members of the party who spoke of loyalty to Hitler. As a rule, in them Stennes received the most derogatory characteristics. The sole purpose of such publications was to belittle the significance of the rebellion, which they tried to present as a conspiracy of ambitious officers or the actions of traitors. Most of the allegiance statements should have led the reader to believe that the party had finally gotten rid of a group of very dangerous extremists who did not believe in the life force of the party.

April 7 "Angrif" continued this work. The newspaper at the same time informed about the change of leaders of the SA and the appointment of Gring as a commissioner over all the Eastern Gau, AM. included Berlin. "Angrif" brought to the attention of the followers that the first event, independently organized by Stennes and his associates, ended in complete failure. The topic of the Stennes rebellion did not leave the pages of the Nazi press on April 8 either. In those days, the national press accused Goebbels of collaborating with the rebels. Goebbels himself called this information a "blow of the bourgeoisie" and called on the National Socialists not to believe the "inventions of the Jewish leaflets." It seemed that by mid-April the situation in the party had stabilized, the split had been eliminated, and the threat of a ban on the NSDAP had passed by.

But the split of the Berlin SA was in the center of attention not only of the German, but also of the international press. Journalists attached great importance to this event. When, at the trial of the Reichswehr, Hitler announced that his party would go

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in a gallant way, and carried out a purge of the party, the democratic parties had a faint hope that Hitler would observe not only the constitution, but also the rules of the parliamentary game. These hopes were further strengthened when Hitler presented the expulsion of Stennes and his storm troopers from the party as a deliverance from dangerous extremists. But much more the press was interested in the future of these "dissidents from the SA." The Lower Saxon Newspaper, for example, wrote: "Only a person who is not far-sighted can experience the flawed joy of the fleeting palace revolution among the National Socialists. On no account should it be made that the National Socialist Party has disappeared from political life. The NSDAP continued to exist, and the fragments of the explosion of the last days did not overturn it. So it's too early to rejoice that her radicalism is on the decline. It just means that the extremists will flow to where they are needed, for example, to the same communists." The Cologne Gazette tolled all the bells in fear: "When the NSDAP split, it ceased to pose a threat to the peace of the country. Taking bo. Taking into account the national veil of current communism, the National Socialist exiles of the Nabernyak will join the KKE, which will give rise to another monstrous danger." The reviews published in the leftist press once again confirmed the possibility of the discontented storm troopers going over to the communist camp. The Orient Express quoted an article from Pravda that had the effect of a bombshell: "The proletarian elements of the NSDAP decided to turn their backs on National Socialism and stick to leftist orientations, which is

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the main road to the masses. They crossed the 6th gang of Stennes, taking into account a possible alliance with the fighting proletariat.

The possibility of a tactical alliance between the revolutionary SA and the KPD was again confirmed by the example of Lieutenant Richard Scheringer, who, during his imprisonment in the Gollnow prison fortress, joined the communists. The mutiny in the SA was a convenient occasion for him to once again appeal to the National Socialists with an appeal to join the Communist Party of Germany. In his appeal, he recounted in detail the numerous cases in which Hitler and

Goebbels betrayed National Socialist ideals. He called on the storm troopers, together with the proletariat, to prepare a people's revolution, which "was to put an end to Jewish exploitation." The question arises, did Scheringer use anti-Semitic agitation only to attract storm troopers to the KKE, or to agitate the entire nationalist camp?

Most likely the call went unanswered. It should not be forgotten that most of the stormtroopers were ideological anti-communists. They were not able to see potential allies in the Reds. The communists were the enemies against whom they fought in the ranks of the volunteer corps during the liquidation of the Bavarian Soviet Republic and the Spartak uprising. They staged bloody skirmishes with him on the streets of German cities.

"Combat Commonwealth" had high hopes for the first rebellion of stormtroopers, which occurred in September 1930. When expectations turned out to be in vain, the leadership of the Strasserians preferred

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to see in the revolutionary stormtroopers "tomorrow's comrades" who could not yet openly declare their sympathies for revolutionary national socialism. The "Combat Commonwealth" did not get tired of bombarding the SA with appeals, to which usually there was no response. It would seem that rapprochement between these two groups was impossible. Moreover, Stennes himself had no intention of joining the KGRNS, which he called "Strasser's salon". But everything began to change when, on April 5, the entire issue of the German Revolution was devoted to the split in the NSDAP. Strasser took the right position. In numerous notes and comments it was impossible to find even a hint of attacks against Stennes. Hitler and his entourage were to blame for everything. In the article "Hitler's strike on the SA", the split in the NSDAP was explained by "the conflict between the socialist feelings of the revolutionary stormtroopers and the reactionary behavior of the bourgeois leadership of the Nazi party", which not only refused to implement 25 points of the party program, but also betrayed working people, having entered into an alliance with the reactionaries in Thuringia and Saxony.

As we can see, the revolutionary National Socialists tried to explain the behavior of the rebel stormtroopers by the same reasons as their own in the summer of 1930. But Strasser completely missed such factors as the financial problem, the question of the place of the SA in the party, personal squabbles, disputes about the reputation of Röhm. But it was they who played a decisive role in provoking a riot.

Firmly convinced that the stormtroopers hold the same views as the leaders of the Combat co

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friendship" and the "Werwolf" group, the Strasserians declared: "The SA must be clearly aware of their revolutionary socialist feelings, they must fully formulate their tasks and become soldiers of the revolution" (and, as we remember, the Antsy assigned the role of non-commissioned officers of the revolution). In a huge article addressed to the "old guard of the SA", it was once again emphasized that now it is necessary to act boldly and decisively. "When you yourself are convinced that it is impossible to carry out a breakthrough of national socialism in the NSDAP, then you would leave the failures of force 6 to command the ideas of the revolutionary formation. You have starved so often, you have shed blood so often, that we will not risk once again sending the bass down the wrong path. Stormtroopers! Listen to the voice of your revolutionary conscience!"

The "German Revolution", published on April 12, became the starting point in the new propaganda strategy of the "Commonwealth of Arms". Now Strasser began to focus solely on the interests of the SA. Without giving specific assessments to Stennes, sometimes even deliberately linking his name with socialist ideas, the KGRNS executive committee wanted the stormtroopers to focus their attention on the revolutionary ideas common to both groups.

But soon Strasser had to admit that the SA was not a political organization. At the very least, the stormtroopers were not very willing to be interested in purely political issues. What did it mean? And the fact that the leaders of the "Combat Community" had to put aside questions of program requirements and in every possible way emphasize the revolution

ionic character of the KGRNS. 165

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To demonstrate his revolutionary spirit, Strasser decided to give the floor to Oberleutnant Wendt on the pages of his newspapers. It was a kind of "martyr of the national revolution." He, like Scheringer, was one of the defendants in the Reichswehr case. But unlike Scheringer, Wendt did not join the Communists, but the Strasserians. Wendt prepared two appeals, which were published one after the other in the German Revolution. Both appeals contained merciless criticism of Hitler, the "new Landsknecht Brüning." He called for a resolute struggle against the reformist line of the Munich leadership. "It is with bitterness that I watch from my prison cell how the leadership of the NSDAP is moving more and more steadily in the wake of bourgeois reaction, how the Führer of the "workers" party turns into a bonze and betrays the very idea of liberation from the fetters of the Treaty of Versailles, the Young Plan and the claws of the capitalist exploiter. Hitler's order to put up with the emergency decrees of the fascist dictator Brüning clearly indicates where the Hitlerite path leads. Not Hitler, not the "brown house", but we, workers, peasants and soldiers, are the future of the German people. There are traitors in Munich. They call us putschists because we have revolutionary energy. I, like my comrade Richard Scheringer, reject Hitler. I believe that Stennes and his revolutionary SA will follow the same path as the working people and will oppose reaction and counter-revolution. Long live the German People's Revolution!

From itself, the executive committee of the "Combat Commonwealth" added: "In the summer of 1930, the avant-garde of the rebo

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revolutionary and socialist forces left the bourgeois-capitalist party of Hitler. Having rallied in the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists", these people defend the idea of national socialism in all its depth and purity. So the revolutionary SA must now show consistency by continuing this process under the slogan "Ministerial seats or the German Revolution."

The split was now interpreted by Strasser as a conflict between the revolutionary will of the SA and the bourgeois practice of Munich. Now it was a consequence of a conspiracy drawn up against Walter Stennes. The leader of the CIRNS, not sparing colors, conveyed the details of the conspiracy. It turns out that Stennes was sacrificed in the name of the formation of a bourgeois coalition, which was supposed to start an intervention war against Russia. The composition of this mythical coalition was to include the NSDAP, the German People's Party, the German People's National Party and the parties of the center. "Further," wrote the German Revolution, "Röhm, with the support of General Hammerstein, was to carry out an armed action against Stennes." |

Strasser decided at all costs to win over the stormtroopers to his side. He even promised Stennes all kinds of support if he decides to create his own organization. This expression of solidarity was not entirely disinterested. Strasser was very much afraid that Stennes would compete with him. And so I decided that in the person of the leader of the rebel stormtroopers it is better to have an ally, not a competitor. Even if this initiative failed, the

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The KGRNS would console themselves with the thought that for a while the stormtroopers would stop one of their favorite activities - hunting down revolutionary National Socialists.

But it was not so easy to distribute this issue of the German Revolution among the stormtroopers. Strasser continued to press for an alliance with the SA, even as the paper's distributors were abused and abused by the stormtroopers. "Comrade stormtroopers! You are facing a fundamental choice. Do you want the reactionary Hitlerite party back? Or do you yearn to continue the struggle for a free National Socialist Germany? For honest fighters, there is only one way. Join the KGRNS!

Strasser prudently suggested that a hypothetical union could be beneficial only if it was formed on the ideological principles proposed by himself. And in order to make this call more friendly, the journalists of the "German Revolution" covered in detail the first activities that Stennes had already carried out outside the NSDAP. They did not spare colorful epithets: "Friedrich von Maker and Stennes' right hand, Svoboda (Svoboda) delivered fiery revolutionary speeches." Naturally, these events were assessed as a first positive step. And of course, the next one was supposed to be joining the "Combat Commonwealth".

Other articles have asserted no less flatteringly that Stennes was the type of officer who embodied the spirit of 1914. And it was he who was supposed to take the place of Hitler! Stennes should have

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realize that he was a revolutionary and henceforth had to join only the revolutionary camp. To try again to win over the stormtroopers, Strasser decided to use Otto Horn.

Otto Horn was for some time a high-ranking stormtrooper in Tau Berlin-Brandenburg. After spending seven years in Russia, he became the "biggest" expert on the "Russian question." He later left the NSDAP. But in fact, his break with Goebbels had nothing to do with the rebellion of the stormtroopers.

But neither the appeal of Wendt, nor the appeal of Otto Horn changed the situation. On April 26, the "German Revolution" tried once again to influence the stormtroopers. But this time it was possible to hear sharply annoyed notes. After that, there was a lull. In May 1931, The German Revolution made only two casual mentions of Walther Stennes. And even then these were tiny notes that described the situation with the possible unification of the two groups. "Internal development of stormtroopers is necessary, but it takes time. The furious incitement waged against us as "Solomon-Bolsheviks" by the Hitlerite Party led to certain psychological difficulties that must be eliminated not today, but tomorrow." The leaders of the "Combat Commonwealth" had no choice but to sit and wait for the attack aircraft to mature.

Oddly enough, but the rapprochement of the two National Socialist groups was provided by a third party. It turned out to be Captain Erhardt. Captain Er

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Hardt was born in 1881 in Dieburg. A naval officer, in 1919 he created his own volunteer corps, which was called the Erhardt Brigade. In March 1920 he was one of the organizers of the Kapp Putsch. Later he created the secret organization "Consul", which was based in Munich. Its members undertook more than one high-profile political

crime, including the murder of Rathenau. Ehrhardt took part in the "beer putsch", but in 1925 he took an anti-Hitler position. With subordinate people (approximately 2000 people) he wanted to start an armed struggle against the National Socialists. He even planned the creation of the United Front of Resistance to Hitler, which was supposed to include supporters of Gregor Strasser, revolutionary National Socialists, the revolutionary wing of the SA and other paramilitarist organizations. In principle, in the name of fighting Hitler, Ehrhardt was ready to make an alliance with the armed alliances of the left parties. In 1933, the "Ehrhardt Brigade" was introduced into the SS. Many of its members joined the conservative resistance. After the assassination attempt on Hitler in 1944, many of them were executed, and Ehrhardt himself ended up in a concentration camp. Nothing is known about his post-war fate.

But back to 1931. After Hitler's success in the Reichstag elections in September 1930, Ehrhardt began to consider him the main threat to all of Germany. He tried to gather together all the national revolutionary forces in order to organize a struggle on two fronts: against the NSDAP and against the Weimar Republic. Ehrhardt was firmly convinced that such a revolution

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This union could be carried out only if there was an armed organization, which would be secretly supported by the Reichswehr. The main slogans of this new political formation were to be "National Revolution" and "United National Front".

This revolution, according to Ehrhardt, which the National Bolsheviks referred to only as a putsch in the manner of Kapp, had to be carried out by various organizations. The "united national front" dreamed of by Ehrhardt was supposed to cover all parties of the right spectrum, "Völkisch" - groups and paramilitary organizations. It was assumed that the new political formation was to win the trust not only of the population, but also of the state apparatus. |

As early as 1926 Ehrhardt established contacts with Stresemann!. From that moment on, he began to enjoy the support of representatives of the heavy industry, who deducted money from him, allegedly for the fight against Bolshevism. Even then, the captain showed interest in Stennes, whose anti-communism was well known throughout Germany. Ehrhardt believed that the leader of the SA, with his revolutionary enthusiasm, would be an excellent tool for realizing his plans. It is not known when the first meeting of these people took place. It is only known that Ehrhardt was ready to provide both material and financial support to Stennes. But after the split of the NSDAP in 1931, Stennes was unable to create a new battle.

1 Gustav Stresemann is the founder and leader of the German People's Party. In August-November 1923, Reich Chancellor of Germany. Then the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Nobel Prize Laureate.

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capable organization. Now it was out of the question that the rebellious SA would become the basis for the "United National Front". If at first Stennes was supported by 10,000 storm troopers, then gradually many of them, who were not officially expelled from the party, preferred to remain in the NSDAP. At that time, Stennes had so little money that they were only enough to print a single issue of a small newspaper, whose content was no less miserable than the design.

To prevent the return of the stormtroopers back to the party, Ehrhard offered Stennes the financing of a newspaper that would have a 10,000th circulation. No one knew where the captain's money came from. The new printed organ was called the National Socialist Monday Newspaper. In addition, Captain Ehrhardt was ready to pay salaries to the leaders of the revolutionary attack aircraft and pay for the organization of certain events. It is not known how Ehrhardt persuaded Stennes to conclude a pact with revolutionary

Strasser's National Socialists. Maybe he intimidated that he would deprive him of funding. Or maybe in some other way. But the fact remains that in 1931 the United National Front began to take on quite visible political outlines. In addition to the Stennes group and the "Combat Commonwealth", it included the "Steel Helmet", the Oberland Union and, of course, the "Erhardt Brigade" itself.

In early May 1931, Stennes agreed to such an alliance. To win over Otto Strasser, Ehrhardt resorted to another ruse. Strasser also needed money, but Captain Re

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wished to play on his ambition. He promised Otto that he would stand at the head of a broad revolutionary front that would become implacable opposition not only to Hitler, but to the Weimar Republic itself. Moreover, Ehrhardt promised that he would try to draw into his camp the remnants of the left wing of the NSDAP, led by Gregor Strasser and Reventlow. Money, political ambitions and kindred feelings did their job - Otto Strasser agreed to an alliance with the Steel Helmet.

The first organizational meeting of the future leadership of the "United National Front" was held secretly. It took place on May 28, 1931 in Munich. In addition to Ehrhardt, Strasser and Stennes, the leader of the "werewolves" Klopke and Major Pabst were present. In order to prepare his supporters for such an unexpected alliance, on April 29, 1931, Strasser published an article in the German Revolution by Ehrhardt, where he allegedly expressed solidarity with the ideas of revolutionary National Socialism. In general, this whole story is entangled in a significant number of omissions and secrets. After the war, Otto Strasser categorically denied receiving any money from Ehrhardt. Perhaps this behavior was due to the fact that documents were made public, which indicated that significant funding for the creation of a "united national front" came from a government that was ready to support any force directed against Hitler.

The pact between Strasser and Stennes was officially signed on June 7, 1931. On that day, as the German Revolution reported, Walter Stennes, Otto Strasser, Herbert Blank and Ernst

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Buhrker put their signatures under the declaration on the creation of the "National Socialist Combat Association of Germany" (NSKD). The new organization consisted of two branches. On one side were civil political unions, student groups, production cells, and ordinary members of the "Combat Commonwealth". On the other side are the paramilitaries, Strasser's security force, and all the stormtroopers. Otto Strasser himself was appointed the political leader of the "Battle Association", and Walter Stennes the head of its military wing. The political bureau, which determined the political course of the organization, consisted mainly of well-known National Socialist "dissidents": Jan, Kübler, Blank, Buchruker, and others.

It was decided to make the German Revolution the central press organ of the NSKD, which Strasser personally continued to edit. Ulrich Oldenburg was appointed technical editor (later he would play an important role in this organization). As an appendix to the "German Revolution", the bulletin "Worker, Peasant and Soldier" was published, which was focused exclusively on attack aircraft. As a matter of fact, its official name sounded somewhat different: "Worker's Fist - Peasants of the German Land - Soldiers of the Liberation Struggle". As if mocking Goebbels' "Angriff" ("Offensive"), a small leaflet "Retreat" was issued. The National Socialist Monday Newspaper continued to be published, which later became the cause of the first internal conflict in the new organization.

All pre-existing youth organizations

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The unions were disbanded and replaced by the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Youth. Strasser composed for her not only the Charter, but also a battle anthem. Already during the creation of the youth branch of the "Combat Association", it became clear how different the views on the policy of the two leaders of the new political union were. Strasser wanted to include in the Charter a democratic procedure for the election of lower and middle managers, but Stennes, guided by the Führer principle, resolutely opposed this. He wanted them to be appointed by the Politburo. As a result, Stennes decided to give the Workers' and Peasants' Youth to Strasser, especially since almost three-quarters of it consisted of his supporters. Some success has been achieved among students. The student section created under the youth organization almost immediately received a seat in the so-called "student parliament". Following the already established scheme, the "National Socialist Production Cells" were created, which were headed by the Berlin worker Hacker. On the initiative of Stennes, another structural subdivision of the NSKD was born. It didn't have a clear name. In the hands of the former police captain Hans Migge, all the powers to collect help for prisoners were concentrated. He had to hire lawyers with the collected money to defend the stormtroopers arrested during skirmishes, buy provisions and cigarettes for the prisoners.

As you can see, the union was formal - the two groups actually continued their independent existence. At the local level, the differences between stormtroopers and revolutionary national social

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sheets were even more significant. The political sector was subdivided into cells, strongholds, combat groups and combat districts. The stormtroopers left the structure of division into Gau and districts borrowed from the NSDAP. Youth and student groups also united in the Gau, which geographically had to correspond to the combat groups. The production cells did not have a clear structure and were under the direct control of the Berlin functionaries. The entire structure of the organization collapsed at the first crisis.

In July. In 1931, the chief of staff of the "Combat Association" Kübler, together with Stennes and Jan, developed a clear control scheme for the NSKD. All of Germany was divided into 12 combat districts. Purely theoretically, the SA should have been part of the battle groups. But this is only theoretical. In Berlin, Brandenburg, Pomerania, the storm troopers did not even think of collaborating with a political organization.

What did the "vertical of power" look like in "Combat Association"? Each battle district was headed by a political leader, who was elected by the leaders of the battle groups. The Gauleiters of the SA, on the other hand, were appointed personally by Stennes and Jan. The national leadership of the organization consisted of all the Gauleiters of the SA, the district political leaders, the youth leadership and representatives of the industrial cells. Above them stood the Politburo and some kind of secret council, the functions of which were not explained. This is what it looked like on paper. But in fact, Friedrich Grabowski, Ehrhardt's political adviser, ran all the affairs of the NSCD. At one time, this man managed to be the press secretary of the Kapp government.

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Perhaps the beginning of the summer of 1931 could be called the most successful period in the history of the "National Socialist Combat Association of Germany". In May 1931, that is

On the eve of the unification of the two groups, the "Combat Commonwealth" had about 6,000 members, and Walter Shtennes controlled 2,000 attack aircraft, most of which were in Berlin and Pomerania. Together, they were able to win over many doubting members of the NSDAP.

But, whatever one may say, Otto Strasser was the first to win from this alliance. Now many people began to share his positions, even those who did not dare to quarrel with Hitler. Most were no longer afraid of this quarrel. Slamming the door, many well-known figures began to leave the NSDAP.

By August 1931, the "Combat Association" numbered 9-10 thousand people, who were unevenly scattered throughout Germany. In fact, there are three main forms of NSKD branches. The first can be attributed to Berlin and Brandenburg, where a strong organization has long existed, the majority of which were stormtroopers. There were also branches that arose literally on the eve of the unification of the "Combat Commonwealth" in Pomerania and the Rhineland. The third form was the traditional outposts of the revolutionary National Socialists: Saxony, Silesia, Mecklenburg. Strong positions in these areas were predetermined not only by the activities of the "Kampf-Verlag" of the Strasser brothers, but also by the existence of the combat groups of the "Werwolf", which traditionally supported the revolutionary nationalists. The rapidly growing membership of the new

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The stronghold of the National Socialist Union in Silesia could be explained by two factors: the "Polish threat" and the freikorps that had been there until now, who guarded the borders from the "Polish bandits". The existence of so many heterogeneous local organizations endangered the very structure of the Combat Association. The Politburo of the NSKD understood this very well, and therefore tried to overcome these difficulties with the help of "political training evenings" and other events.

Otto Strasser developed a training course specifically for the SA, the model for which was the "training evenings" of the "Combat Commonwealth". In 1931, the educational course of the SA included only three topics: "What distinguishes us from the NSDAP?", "What distinguishes us from the communists", "What can the front of workers, peasants and soldiers do?". The same "14 Theses of the German Revolution", as well as the work "We are looking for Germany" and the new economic program published in the pamphlet "Building German Socialism" were taken as the theoretical basis for these courses.

Training materials for attack aircraft were developed by Strasser as early as May 1931. In them, he deliberately defended his anti-communism, as he knew the attitude of the stormtroopers towards the KKE. Although they had little interest in politics, they always preferred sports and street fights. In the lecture "What distinguishes us from the communists?" he focused on the class struggle, which he described as counter-revolutionary and pro-capitalist. He vehemently criticized the internationalist and materialist character of Marxism, which

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who was one of the main enemies of the people's community. |

To emphasize the unity and cohesion of the organization, which in fact never existed, Otto Strasser undertook a demonstrative move. On June 14, 1931, at the Brandenburg rally of members of the "Combat Association", the black banner with a sword and a hammer turned into a symbol of the revolutionary SA. This rally was supposed to demonstrate the power of the new organization to the whole country. Therefore, no money was spared on him. "Civilian" and attack aircraft from all over

Germany was delivered by three ships. The rally delegates were met by an orchestra and numerous speakers. At the banner transfer ceremony, Stennes delivered a fiery speech. Strasser had to speak twice. Once in the morning, when he summed up the results of political activities since July 1930. The second time after lunch, talking about the tasks of the "National Socialist Fighting Association of Germany".

Not only members of the Berlin and Brandenburg organizations took part in the rally. Participants arrived from Hannover, Pomerania and many other cities. In addition to the stormtroopers themselves and the revolutionary National Socialists, representatives of the revolutionary movement "Landvolk", "Werwolf" and the union "Tannenberli" were present at the rally. Rumors that the "Combat Association" should move closer to the "reactionary" organizations like "Tannenberg" or "Steel Helmet" caused discontent in the national-Bolshevik wing of the Strasserians.

The event, which was supposed to show the unity and strength of the "Combat Association", in fact deed

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became a demonstration of the absence of any mutual understanding. The SA preferred to keep to themselves, coming to the rally on a separate steamer. They refused to attend the political part of the rally, spending time at the stadium and shooting range. They behaved arrogantly, went to the shooting gallery out of turn, sometimes refused to pay. Stormtroopers considered it above their dignity to get acquainted with "civilians".

This wasn't the first time this had happened. The political wing grumbled unhappily. The indignation began to grow after the Hamburg meeting on July 18, 1931. During the demonstration, which was supposed to tell the population about the goals of the "Combat Association", the column was attacked by Nazi stormtroopers. A fight ensued. In the meantime, the security of the demonstration, which consisted of several Stennes stormtroopers, chose not to intervene, since the main body of stormtroopers was delayed on the way. And this is in the conditions when the local representatives of the NSCD reported to Berlin that they had become aware of the intention of the Hamburg Nazis to crack down on the Strasserians! Later it turned out that Shtennes with his security group not only delayed on the way, but even refused to leave for Hamburg!

In order to hold another meeting, Strasser had to turn to ANTIFA again. And what happened in the end? About a thousand people came to the meeting, of which only 80 (!!) were Strasserians. Judging by the police reports, the communists did not just take part in the rally, which was guarded by their own forces. They even paid for the hall, printed posters calling to come to this event. As a result, all the political success went to the KKE, which

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up to this D was in principle logical. The police commissioner wrote the following about this: "Success only reached

communist party, communists treated Strasse

rum as with his janitor. And on July 19, Narodnaya Gazeta came out under the heading "Knockout to Strasser."

As it turned out, Shtennes was not able to ensure the protection of the events of the NSKD, and the safety of his own people. We didn't have to look far for examples. At the same time, on July 19, 15 members of the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants'

youth." In Hamburg, the murmuring began to develop into open discontent: they could not understand the position of the Berlin leadership. Why raise anti-communist slogans if there was no use from Stennes' storm troopers? This criticism was actively supported by the left wing of the Strasserians. Even Strasser himself regretted that he had to abandon his pro-Soviet, Eastern orientation.

Partial rejection of the pro-Soviet orientation confronted Strasser with the need to fight on two fronts: against reaction, on the one hand, and against international communism, on the other. Such political attitudes prompted the leader of the revolutionary National Socialists to the idea of creating the Black Front project, the main contours of which began to emerge as early as June 1931. It is not clear how the National Bolshevik wing of the "Combat Association" reacted to such changes in tactics and strategy. It traditionally focused on the USSR. But at that time, Stalin abandoned the tactics of rapprochement between the two "outcasts in Europe": Russia and Germany.

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Joseph Vissarionovich began rapprochement with Poland and France, which were considered the worst enemies of Germany.

In those days, Strasser adopted the ideas of reaction, liberalism, and socialism expounded by Arthur Möller van den Broek in The Third Reich. Strasser decided to modernize them. In the political life of the country, he singled out four blocs: black-white-red (conservative reaction), black-red-gold (liberal reaction), red (liberal revolution) and black (conservative revolution). Strasser considered the propensity of both revolutionary blocs to fight among themselves to be quite natural. Now he was convinced that it was necessary to fight mercilessly against the international, materialistic forces and the practice of "godless Marxism", in which he began to see a terrible danger to the people's forces. The conservative revolution had to fight on three fronts. To do this, he needed to win over to his side "revolutionary-political soldiers", such as members of the Werewolf, Oberland, Viking, and Hannenberg unions. But the backbone of the front of the conservative revolution, of course, was to be formed by the Strasserians and the revolutionary storm troopers. These first drafts of the Black Front were fundamentally different from those adopted at the Second Imperial Congress. To begin with, he believed that the "Combat Association", "Werwolf" and "Erhardt Brigade" were able not only to create a movement that would attract numerous "Völkisch" groups to their side, but would also play a decisive military role in the further development of revolutionary events. At that

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At the time, Strasser dreamed of an armed revolution, and this explained why he was reproached that he, together with Ehrhardt, sought to organize a new Kapp putsch.

Strasser was already planning the publication of the Black Front newspaper when the National Socialist Combat Association of Germany was literally torn apart by internal contradictions. Strasser's Napoleonic plans were put an end to by his internal "enemies", who clearly underestimated his energy and strength. By the way, criticism of Strasser began to sound, among other things, because he was going to use the money intended for the newspaper Nemetskaya Revolyutsiya to publish the first issues of the Black Front.

The first signs of a crisis in the newly created "Combat Association" appeared on June 29, 1931. It was then that the Hamburg revolutionary National Socialists published an open letter characterizing Ehrhardt and Stennes as reactionary nationalists who had nothing to do with the German Revolution. On June 30, the political leadership of the organization sent a response to Hamburg, which consisted of allegations, which, moreover, turned out to be blatant lies: "We took your attention to your statements. Note that Captain Erhardt has no influence on the policy of the "Battle Association".

He has no financial control over the launch of the "German Revolution" and over the divisions of our movement. We dare to remark that the National Socialist Monday Newspaper is a private enterprise of Walter Stennes. In our opinion, this is where he invests his money

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Captain Erhardt. Our leader Otto Strasser denies that the captain takes part in the 6th edition of the German Revolution. It should be clear to you that the joining of the Stennes group to us happened when the stormtroopers agreed with our ideological guidelines." Under this political linden stood the signatures of Strasser and Kübler.

The Hamburg revolutionary National Socialists might have believed this reply, but at the beginning of 1931 the entire German press began talking in unison about the "operations of Captain Ehrhardt" and his secret sponsors. There was a risk of a loud political scandal flaring up. On July 18, the Hamburg revolutionary National Socialists held a general meeting. At it, they came to the conclusion that it was at least illogical to proclaim anti-communist slogans if they constantly had to resort to the help of the KPD in order to protect themselves from the attacks of the NSDAP. But Strasser was adamant - the leaders of the North German communists spoke out against the national liberation struggle, and therefore a ruthless ideological war had to be waged against the KKE. It was impossible to avoid an explosion of discontent.

On August 3, 1931, the Hamburg group withdrew from the Combat Association. Its leaders said: "The Fighting Union Political Bureau denied having any dealings with Ehrhardt. Strasser argued that the captain financed only W. Stennes. But we have learned that the Strasser group, like the Hitlerite party, is now following a dangerous political path, placing the sign of slavery between the German Revolution and the Kapp

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putsch. This fact alone is enough to deny the Strasser movement a revolutionary role and declare that it can be regarded as an experiment of anti-popular forces and financial tycoons, which is designed to draw the revolutionary forces away from the fight against the Young plan. For a German free socialist fatherland of workers, peasants and soldiers! For the German Revolution! |

After their break with Strasser, the Hamburg group joined the communists. The Nazi "Angriff" showed an increased interest in this conflict, since Goebbels saw in it the beginning of the process of disintegration of the "Combat Association". The observation is absolutely fair - many of the old revolutionary National Socialists have ceased to trust their leadership and Otto Strasser. It is noteworthy that Strasser's most devoted comrades-in-arms turned their backs on him: the Reschke brothers and Wilhelm Korn. It was their signatures that stood under the appeal of July 2, 1930.

Strasser tried to hush up the conflict and in his article portrayed it as a small misunderstanding, as a result of which only 8 people left the movement. But everything was in vain, following the Hamburg group, many adherents of the ideas of the "German Revolution" began to leave the movement one after another. The situation escalated to the point of betrayal when Strasser removed Ulrich Oldenburg, editor of the German Revolution. The occasion was thought up the most stupid. Oldenburg, it turns out, "was delirious and weakened the fighting groups, contributing to their disappearance." This next national-bolshevik

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Incidentally, the crisis resulted in a conflict between Strasser and Stennes.

The division of the "Combat Association" into a political wing and a paramilitary wing was theoretically substantiated by the various tasks that these units faced. But in practice, this was only the unwillingness of the two leaders to let go of control over their supporters. In principle, the leader of an organization must possess innate qualities. He had to restrain the centrifugal forces in the organization and, thanks to his authority, carry out the decisions made. Here we could observe a completely different picture. Shtennes reproached Strasser for being too democratic, since he allowed ordinary members of the organization to elect leaders. In addition, Stennes was dissatisfied with the fact that Strasser was dependent on the executive committee and the Politburo, meaning primarily Buchrucker and Blank. The leader of the revolutionary SA himself was, as already mentioned, a staunch supporter of the Fuhrer principle. And this meant that he himself wanted to appoint political functionaries and personally decide all matters.

These statements clearly demonstrated the fundamental differences between the leader of the stormtroopers and Strasser, who was firmly convinced that it was precisely his political abilities that made him the leader of the organization. He did not share Stennes' views on the role of leader. Personal rivalry was supplemented by political inconsistencies. Stennes raved about a coup d'etat, not being essentially a revolutionary. Ideology and worldview education played a secondary role for him,

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and the "civilian" structures themselves had nothing to do with the true National Socialist movement. Stennes believed in the possibility of reorganizing the state through a coalition with all the nationalists, who, having formed a broad front, were to come to power by force of arms. But Strasser was not prepared to call any coup the German Revolution. He was also embarrassed by the fact that, formally advocating the liberation struggle, Stennes, under the influence of Erhardt, began to focus on rapprochement with France.

The political differences between the stormtroopers and the former members of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" became more and more significant. The Strasserians had a higher political consciousness, were better educated than the SA, who relied on brute force. Those preferred to play sports rather than sit in political classes. Almost all articles about stormtroopers published in the German Revolution were devoted to sports, shooting, friendly meetings of SA veterans, "struggle against the forces of nature." Active Strasserians could hardly put up with the apoliticality of the storm troopers, who not only criticized the possibility of rapprochement with the KKE, but flatly refused to contact "civilians". In the Strasser group, the flames of the old conflict began to flare up again.

There is no doubt that it was Erhardt who persuaded Stennes to leave the ranks of the "Combat Association" on August 29, 1931. The cynicism of the situation lay in the fact that the day before the captain had met with Strasser and both expressed their "unanimous" opinion to me.

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the idea that both wings of the "Combat Association" should be transformed into the "Black Front". One way or another, but on September 12, both groups of National Socialist "dissidents" broke off relations. Stennes decided to go his own way - he established the "Independent National Socialist Fighting Society of Germany".

After another split, the very existence of the "National Socialist Fighting Association of Germany" was threatened. The withdrawal of the Reschke brothers from the NSKD weakened Strasser's position in Berlin and Brandenburg. After the expulsion of Oldenburg, unrest began in Hanover, Spandau, Braunschweig and Saxony. But the split hit the Hamburg group the hardest: more than 500 people left it. As a rule, these were supporters of the national Bolshevik course. On the right flank, Shtennes' attack aircraft went into a split, which

actually put an end to the battle groups in Pomerania. Together with Stennes, about 3,000 people left the NSKD, who could not forgive Strasser for "flirting with the Bolsheviks." In fact, the youth organization ceased to exist, some of whose members followed Oldenburg, and some followed Stennes.

Organizational turmoil, numerous splits, newspapers that stopped publishing, finally discouraged those who preferred to remain in the organization.

One of Strasser's employees, Hans Dörner, stated in an interview that the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" had high hopes for the Stennes rebellion. It seemed to many that the most conscious part of the stormtroopers came out of the NSDAP, that these SA correctly understood the National Socialist activists.

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viz. But in fact, the revolutionary stormtroopers turned out to be apolitical subjects. Their political school was barricades, fights and shootings. Strasser was unable to change the mentality of the stormtroopers, who were guided more by temperament than by political talent. Having developed for his organization the theory of struggle on three fronts (against Weimar, the Communists, the reactionary Hitler), Strasser overestimated his own strength. The organization's ideology turned out to be a set of loosely connected political maxims. From the ideological baggage of the NSDAP, Strasser borrowed an anti-legal and anti-Marxist orientation, but, on the other hand, the National Bolshevik wing constantly collaborated with the KKE.

Trying to get ahead of the economic and political crisis that gripped Germany, the Strasser group tried to represent the most diverse trends. This completely confused the Strasserians, who had never been one thing. In such an environment, crises and splits were simply inevitable.

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Chapter 3

ULRICH OLDENBURG AND THE COMMITTED COMMONWEALTH OF THE GERMAN REVOLUTIONERS

On July 26, 1931, the German Revolution announced the expulsion from the organization of the former editor of this publication, Ulrich Oldenburg, who was "engaged in sabotage" in the NSKA. This step must

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was to put an end to the controversy that had raged within the Combat Team since April of that year. Ulrich Oldenburg was far from the last person in the revolutionary National Socialist movement. He was not only the editor of the German Revolution, but also the head of the Berlin district and the "chief imperial orator."

Ulrich Oldenburg was born on April 26, 1903. Initially, he was the editor of the Nemetskaya Gazeta, which was published by the Pan-German Union. In the late 1920s, he left the ranks of the association. Later he timidly asserted that he was neither a member of the NSDAP nor the Pan-German League. One way or another, but in the spring of 1930 he joined Otto Strasser, who showed great interest in his journalistic experience. Until 1931, Oldenburg remained the permanent editor of the German Revolution, at the same time she was a member of the executive committee for domestic policy. His career was to be envied. Already in July 1930, he became a co-owner of the National Socialist publishing house, and in January 1931, he became the asset manager of this enterprise and the person legally responsible for the publication of all newspapers. He almost immediately received a wide

fame in the circles of revolutionary National Socialists, National Revolutionaries and National Bolsheviks. Many people appreciated his oratory skills: Oldenburg organized events not only in Berlin, but throughout the country.

Relations between Oldenburg and Strasser began to deteriorate when a course was taken for rapprochement with Erhardt and Stennes. The political views of Captain Ehrhardt, his connections with big business, and most

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most importantly, the desire to become the "grey eminence" of a broad front of paramilitary groups oriented towards the establishment of an anti-Marxist "national dictatorship" was absolutely alien, according to Oldenburg, to national revolutionary socialism. Strasser's association with the revolutionary storm troopers, as well as the publication of a joint press organ planned for September 1931, did not suit the young left-wing politician in any way. In addition, such steps threatened his personal position, as new publishers and political figures appeared on the horizon, whom Oldenburg did not take seriously at first.

At the time, Strasser was fed up with left-wing criticism, and therefore was only waiting for a convenient opportunity to discredit him. But he could not implement this plan, as he was forced to devote himself entirely to managing the suddenly expanded organization. In the meantime, Oldenburg openly expressed solidarity with the Reschke brothers, who were dissatisfied with their connections with the "reactionary nationalists".

For Strasser, it was a complete surprise that most of the regional leaders took the side of Oldenburg. Without waiting for the logical end of such a development of events, Strasser decided to rely on those members of the organization who remained loyal to him personally. On July 20, the executive committee of the "Combat Association" decided to expel Oldenburg from the organization. But Oldenburg was not going to be inactive. He established contacts with Wendt, who was still in prison. As the formal owner and publisher of "Ne

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of the German Revolution", he decided to publish the issue of the newspaper exclusively with his comments. In order to regain the right to publish his own newspaper with the same name, Strasser began a lawsuit against him. Between 1 and 13 August, neither side succeeded in publishing The German Revolution. And if Oldenburg had the legal right to do this, then he lacked the necessary financial resources. The "German Revolution" did see the light of day on August 13, 1931. This was the only number where Oldenburg was able to attack Strasser with devastating criticism. In the article "The Fall of Strasser" he made public the connection between Strasser and Ehrhardt, whom he portrayed as a government agent hired to fight the communists and real German revolutionaries. He called Strasser's activities "pseudo-socialist deceit", which in fact was the last reserve of capitalism.

Oldenburg resorted to such outright attacks because he believed that the "National Socialist Fighting Association of Germany" was on the verge of collapse. He 'wanted to bring into existence a new organization. Almost at the same time when the Hamburg split occurred, an appeal signed by Oldenburg was walking around the country.

"Fighting friends! I hope that you are German revolutionaries. Revolutionaries unbroken by the hurricane. Revolutionaries devoted to the idea, not the personality. We know,

that our idea will win. She must win because she exists in the name of Germany. Let personally

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The ones who left the ideas follow by the side. A month has already passed since, on Berlin 6, I wrote my thoughts on the dogmatic and erroneous course of Strasser. I hoped to resolve the embarrassing situation that our organization had come across. But in vain... The result was only reproaches & grumbling and lack of confidence. In addition, Strasser and Kübler wrote to our comrades & Hannover that I was not a suitable person for them, that I was expressing only a personal opinion. Isn't it a familiar method? And I just wanted truth, clarity and openness. Strasser behaves like a demigod who has been called to give birth to a new state and economic system. In the failure of the burden, Rudolf Röhm and Wilhelm Korn did not want to be limited to 49% nationalization and proposed to settle this issue at the imperial congress. But they were thrown out of the "Combat Commonwealth". Strasser dealt just as harshly with the Reschke brothers and with me. As a result, many went over to the KKE. We should not watch & companies to our "leaders", we should keep a vigilant eye on them. Strasser is a good journalist, but a poor leader. Anyone who secretly or openly maintains ties with Roman Catholic shareholders is our adversary. Look at Blanc—this is a political baby, while Buchruker is only capable of appeals for ferocity and obedience. Such "Leaders" must disappear. We don't need & CAs that have been given the status of a special organization. Every German revolutionary is a stormtrooper. The political amateur Stennes is only a means to an end. As a national leader

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we don't need an ex-officer or a semi-educated intellectual. We need a German worker: Reschke, Wendt or someone else. We ignore Erhardt and Strasser's "Black Front"—that is their real name. We need a German front of workers and peasants!"

This call had a striking effect - throughout Germany, revolutionary National Socialists declared solidarity with Oldenburg. He spent more than a month gathering together all his forces, devoting most of his time to propagating his views and continuing the polemic with Strasser.

On August 15, Strasser published an open letter. In it, he spoke about the "provocation of Oldenburg, who was a" spy for Goebbels ". He allegedly received a secret order to organize sabotage, and in the event of a political success of the NSKD, to split the organization and take the doubters back to the NSDAP. Strasser launched into yet another lie. He completely rejected any contact with the reactionaries, claiming that he had seen through the plans of Oldenburg in time. He was supposed to "derail the holding of the referendum of the 6th Prussia, thereby removing the NSCD from participating in the 6th Landtag elections." The fact is that the opposition decided to put an end to the ruling coalition in Prussia, which consisted of social democrats and centrists. On February 1, 1931, the Steel Helmet made a similar initiative. On July 23, the Communist Party supported the idea to dissolve the Prussian Landtag. The referendum took place on August 9, 1931. The Landtag was not dissolved, as only 57% of voters were in favor of this proposal. This was the actual defeat of the opposition. |

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outlining three key points. The "German Revolution" remained the publication of the "Combat Association", "14 Theses of the German Revolution" - its official program. As if wishing to reassure the National Bolshevik wing, Strasser declared that he was ready to cooperate with any forces focused on creating a just society, be it Telman or Hitler. No longer able to hide their relationship with

Erhardt, he called his financial assistance "a sacrifice in the name of a brighter future and the cause of the revolution National Socialism."

Oldenburg's answer was placed in The German Revolution, which Strasser considered his own. In it, he resolutely denied the very possibility of any connections with Goebbels, refuted the attachment of his statements to the Prussian referendum. At the same time, he did not forget to mention that it was he who was the only legal publisher and owner of the newspaper. In confirmation of this, Oldenburg cited court decisions. He did not even deny that he met with Stennes and discussed the prospects for creating a new political organization.

Another interpretation of these events is also possible. Seeing that Stennes had finally broken off relations with Strasser, Oldenburg decided to receive financial assistance from Erhardt himself. But in this situation, all the radicalism and national Bolshevism of Oldenburg was nothing more than a cunning ploy in the struggle for power. Although we are unlikely to know the truth. He ended his next accusation with the words: "We will bury Strasser's faith, and we will throw him in a social reactionary coffin."

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But Strasser's political funeral was easier on paper than in reality. Putting together a new group was not so easy. Oldenburg decided that a person of national importance should be at the head of the new organization, and offered this post to Chief Lieutenant Wendt. He had only a couple of weeks left in prison. Wendt immediately gave his consent to lead the NEW UNION.

As early as August 30, The German Revolution appeared under the heading: "Oberleutnant Wendt: Leader of the Combat Commonwealth." Below was the following note: "Strasser and Stennes betrayed us, as Hitler and Goebbels did once. Behind our backs, they got in touch with the pro-French counter-revolutionary Ehrhardt, who has long existed on the money of Brüning and the industrialist. For us, personality is nothing. Everything is deeds in the name of the German Revolution. We followed Strasser and Stennes, as they swore allegiance to the revolution. If we were now to remain submissive to them, which in itself is unlikely, we would become traitors to our cause. We are handing over leadership to Lieutenant Wendt. We will continue to carry the banner of the German Revolution." This appeal was signed by Oldenburg and the Reschke brothers.

When Wendt took over the new organization, he remarked about Strasser and his entourage: "The writers and Landsknechts are mocking our cause. They called on us to fight against fascism and the liberal bourgeoisie. Revolution and freedom in words turned out to be reaction and betrayal in deeds. We refuse "committees" and huge

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nyh headquarters of the SA. We don't want to see bosses anymore! Disagreements that had arisen because of Stennes and Strasser have been eliminated. As long as the revolution demands it, we will cooperate with all revolutionary groups. How will this collaboration go? We will march separately, but fight together. We select the type of writers who constitute elastic ambiguities.

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lazy programs. Our political line is clear.

With the people against capitalism! With Russia against Versailles! Everything for the Great German Socialist State of Workers and Peasants!"

But when this letter from Wendt appeared in print, it misled the reader. The author of the letter radically changed his mind when Otto Strasser visited him in prison. Following this, the German Revolution, again published by Strasser, published a statement by the same Wendt, who decided to remain loyal to the leader of the "National Socialist Fighting Association of Germany". "Personally, I take the honest will of Strasser. I won't lift a finger for these dull liberals, who in principle are ordinary reactionaries trying to play a role in German politics. The last passage was intended for the supporters of Oldenburg. As you can see, the range of accusations in the camp of the revolutionary National Socialists was not diverse.

The most surprising thing is that on August 30, two different newspapers with the same title, The German Revolution, came out in Berlin. Moreover, they were published by warring factions. Strasser decided to take this adventurous step, despite the possibility of prosecution.

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This turn of events was a heavy blow for Oldenburg. At the end of August 1931, he realized that most of the members of the NSKD remained loyal to Strasser. He could no longer count on Wendt. So that his supporters would not go over to the KKE or the National Bolshevik circles, Oldenburg had to urgently create his own organization and formulate new political principles. The new organization was called the Combat Commonwealth of German Revolutionaries.

By the time the "Combat Commonwealth of German Revolutionaries" was created, which took place in September 1931, complete confusion reigned in the group that had broken away from the Strasser organization. In order to somehow put things in order, Oldenburg prepared the so-called "First Internal Letter". In it, he outlined his vision of the future organizational structure of the Commonwealth of Revolutionaries. His constructions were not distinguished by originality and were very similar to the structure of the "Combat Commonwealth". At that time, Strasser realized that the "National Socialist Fighting Association of Germany" had collapsed, and decided to return to his organization the old name "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists."

As a matter of fact, the goals of the Commonwealth of Revolutionaries seemed to have been copied from Strasser: war against capitalism, reaction and Marxism and the Versailles system, struggle against democracy, compromise and the legal way of coming to power. The main goal was "the German revolution, which should create a socialist economy, form a nation state and

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renew German culture. This organization resolutely rejected the parliamentary path and hoped for an alliance with Soviet Russia.

Although Oldenburg planned to create a rigidly centralized organization, he left local organizations the right to act independently. All members of the "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries" had to adhere to a single political line, but the central leadership had to listen to the opinion expressed from below. In everyday political practice, each "German revolutionary" had to act autonomously, representing a separate military-political unit. So that the authorities could not put pressure on the "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries", Oldenburg created his organization in fact as an underground formation. He immediately foresaw that his union

will have to operate in an environment of heightened danger. He himself contributed to the "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries" gaining a dubious reputation.

But in fact, there was no need to talk about real underground work. The "German revolutionaries" were only supposed to strengthen the revolutionary potential of Germany. And how could an organization whose leadership was in full view in Berlin conduct underground work? It consisted of five people. But, observing revolutionary romance, she contacted local groups through special "confidants". And there were no local groups, as such. They were created only in case of emergency.

As mentioned above, communication with the central

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management was carried out through special proxies. It was they who conveyed to the leaders of the so-called sectors the instructions of the leaders of the Commonwealth of Revolutionaries. In the central leadership, the only person who knew the faces of trusted people was the head of documentation. A strange position, especially considering that this organization did not keep a file on members and supporters. The application for membership in the organization was immediately destroyed by the head of the local geographical sector. And only this leader knew the real size of the local group. The "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries" itself was supposed to be 95% as a disguised organization. Its members had to be in various non-political unions, such as travel associations or smokers' clubs. But at the same time, it was planned that they would infiltrate revolutionary groups, show themselves politically there, and thereby prepare the basis for revolutionary actions. In principle, the main task of the rank-and-file members was to reorient the opposition groups to fight against the Versailles system. The "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries" flatly refused any public actions, as it was not going to

conquer the masses.

And then the question arises: how was this semi-underground organization supposed to treat such strong revolutionary groups as, for example, the Communist Party? It was stated that it was necessary to systematically destroy the KKE. It was not even that many communists were convinced that their party was incapable of taking decisive action. Relationship with

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the extreme left depends on their readiness to support by all means the war against the system, their readiness to "fight the revolutionary struggle for the destruction of capitalism". At that time, in October 1931, the Oldenburg group held elitist views, considering themselves "secret officers of the German Revolution" who were supposed to provoke an armed action by the communists. (Strasser was only talking about non-commissioned officers.)

At the first stage of his activity, Oldenburg did not plan to pay much attention to the communists, as he was going to focus on the Nazi party. He wanted to intensify the dissatisfaction of the rank and file National Socialists, who did not understand why the alliance with the reactionary forces was concluded and the "Hartsburg Front" was taking shape! The "German revolutionaries" were supposed to infiltrate the events of the NSDAP and conduct careful agitation, revealing the true German socialists. This time, Oldenburg did not renounce the class struggle, as he understood it as a struggle between the exploiters and the oppressed.

However, this did not prevent the "German revolutionaries" from believing that there were no classes. The class struggle was nothing but the thesis borrowed from Strasser about 97% of the German people fighting against 3% of the exploiters.

To demonstrate the fundamental

1 The name comes from the town of Bad Harzburg, where an agreement was reached to create a single "national opposition", which included: the NSDAP, the German People's National Party, the "Steel Helmet", the Imperial Land Union, the "Pan-German Union".

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the difference between the "German revolutionaries" and the revolutionary National Socialists, the leadership of the "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries" claimed that their organization was "truly revolutionary, since it existed underground. The answer to the question: Was Oldenburg's organization more radical than the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists"? — seems obvious. In October 1931, the "German revolutionaries" began preparations for a series of terrorist attacks. Oldenburg himself refused political discussions and ideological programs. With all his activities, he wanted to dissociate himself from the Strasserians. In principle, he did not say anything new and original. He simply created an extremist version of the "Combat Commonwealth" headed by Otto Strasser.

At least until March 1932, Oldenburg preached the same Strasserian national socialism multiplied by the romance of revolutionary terrorism. This was confirmed by the topics that he chose for propaganda. And to be even more precise, Oldenburg's ideology was not a very high-quality copy of National Bolshevism, which was more like the ideological model of Otto Strasser. This point of view will become even more convincing after reading the numbers of the "German Revolution", published personally by Oldenburg. In two articles he spoke about German law and the interventionist war against the USSR (of course, he condemned preparations for the latter). In all other respects, except for criticism of Strasser and his organization, it was about the main ideological postulates of the "German revolutionaries": the idea of a popular community

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and rejection of capitalism. After reading, one could be convinced of the ideological immaturity of the leadership of the Commonwealth of Revolutionaries. "The capitalist, without any doubt, is the one who owns more than he can consume; who grows rich from excess profits converted into bank interest. The state should make it its goal to correct such injustice. The capitalist strives for wealth by making everyone around him even poorer, forcing them to serve him. The "German revolutionaries" saw the solution to the accumulated problems as follows: "We must present all the rich as capitalists. Our abundance should not be criminal, since our loved ones should not suffer from it. Capitalism itself has been described as "sadism, paranoia of power, human degeneration". Capitalism was "a remnant of the Barbary era, and therefore it prevents the formation of a true popular community. He creates a society consisting of slaves and masters, wolf and dog.

"But thanks to socialism we will be able to make everyone rich," concluded Oldenburg. However, the service of the gross national income to the interests of the nation was called the only socialist measure. The phrase is pompous, but empty, not implying any specific measures. Even a simple linguistic analysis of these texts reveals the unpretentiousness of lexical constructions and the presence of the simplest grammatical forms. This

once again shows that Oldenburg and his supporters did not have the necessary education that would allow them to choose the right words that could reflect

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the essence of their idea. Revolutionary daydreaming remained unexpressed, not revealed to the general public.

So after all, was Oldenburg a National Bolshevik in 1931? If we take into account the potential alliance with the German communists and the intention to conclude an alliance with Soviet Russia, then its course could be called National Bolshevik with a certain stretch. But it is more correct to speak of one of the options for the development of revolutionary National Socialism, a path somewhat different from Strasser's.

Preparations for the revolution at Oldenburg went with a creak. Due to financial difficulties, he was forced to stop publishing the newspaper. Although he did not abandon the idea of covering the life of the "Commonwealth of Revolutionaries" in his "internal letters". Reproaching Strasser for being a leader, Oldenburg did not behave much better. Moreover, he took the role of leader himself. A new stage in the development of this inconspicuous organization came in December 1931, when the former NSDAP Kreisleiter Gotthard Schild created the National Socialist Struggle Movement. In the leadership of this organization, in addition to Schild himself, there were two former members of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists", who somewhat revised Strasser's theses. Their program envisaged a "Great Free Socialist Germany" to be built as a "military state with strict leadership." Schild himself proclaimed the nationalization of industry and banks, the introduction of a socialist planned economy, which would be based on a system of Soviet

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and tov. The German economy was to become self-sufficient (autarkic), it was necessary to introduce a monopoly on foreign trade, to support the small producer and the peasant. This was supposed to be done in the form of granting subsidies, returning the people to the land, combating the flight from the village to the city, creating peasant farms with sufficient land.

This program of building German socialism was much more radical than Strasser's constructions, especially as regards the level and extent of nationalization. It is impossible not to notice that it provided for permanent councils and a planned economy. But this time, too, it was about a local variant of the development of revolutionary national socialism. In fact, the common ideology and revolutionary aspirations led to the unification of the organizations of Oldenburg and Schild. It was these people who began to play a decisive role among the "German revolutionaries". They even staged a comedy court at which the verdict was passed: neither Hitler nor his ideology had the right to bear the high title of socialist. Unfortunately, the fate of this organization is unknown. We can only state that the Schild-Oldenburg group failed to play any role in the history of the Weimar Republic, which was living out its last days in political chaos. In February 1933, the Fellowship of German Revolutionaries, like many other organizations of revolutionary National Socialists and National Revolutionaries, were banned by the Nazis. Numerous warnings against the perception of communist ideology allow

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to attribute the "German revolutionaries" to the radical wing of the revolutionary national socialism, and not to authentic National Bolshevism. The events of 1933 and the rise of the Nazis to power crushed Oldenburg's belief in the possibility of resisting the power of a repressive state.

Part M "BLACK FRONT"

Chapter 1 THE CREATION OF THE "BLACK FRONT"

The exit from the organization of Walter Stennes and the split caused by Ulrich Oldenburg so weakened the "National Socialist Fighting Association of Germany" that in August 1931 Otto Strasser had to put aside all affairs and urgently resolve pressing organizational issues. During the crisis of July-August 1931, too many members left his organization. People did this for two reasons: they either did not believe in the possibility of the existence of a third way, independent of the KKE and the NSDAP, or did not agree with the idea of creating a "Black Front", which, having raised anti-Marxist slogans to the banners, was supposed to organize coup d'état in Germany. The whole organization had to pay for the mistakes made by Strasser. She actually lost her newspapers. The "German Revolution" was under the control of Oldenburg, and the National Socialist

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leaf letters" and completely ceased to exist. Stormtroopers left the "Combat Association" in droves. Even the creation of a "revolutionary black front", which included the Strasserians, "werewolves" and the "Erhardt Brigade", could not keep them. I had to come to terms with this. The Black Front was supposed to start its anti-state activities, obeying the orders of Erhardt. They weren't discussed.

Very little is known about this period in the history of the Black Front. But it was August 1931 that became the transitional period. It was then that a new organization appeared on the political landscape of Germany, which was destined to play an important role in the history of the country. At this time, Strasser was making incredible efforts to piece together the fragments of the collapsed organization and finally liquidate the inner-party opposition. As a result, on August 3, the youth organization of the Strasserians was left without leadership. After looking at the remains of the once active youth wing, Strasser decided to completely eliminate the youth branch. Its members joined as ordinary comrades-in-arms in the adult organization. But the situation was difficult, and on August 5, Strasser publishes a "teneral appeal to all groups and strongholds." There was no result - "Combat Association" agonized. In Berlin, once a stronghold of left-wing National Socialism, Strasser found it hard to find followers. Of the past 10 thousand supporters, he could rely on the strength of

two thousand people.

To see for yourself how strong

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the organization suffered, Strasser toured the country. He composed, so to speak, a picture of human losses. After visiting several cities, he decided to stop in Thuringia in order to start preparations for the Second Imperial Congress right on the spot. To help him in this were ten provincial leaders of the "Combat Groups", appointed as "political commissars". They had unlimited powers. Although what powers could representatives of an organization that was breathing its last. Basically, their task was to identify the supporters of Oldenburg, who had to be urgently disposed of. In addition, they had to draw up a file on those who were loyal to Strasser, or at least continued to sympathize with him. Among these people they were to subscribe to the newspaper Cherny Front, the first issue of which was published on September 1, 1931. In the "illegal" issue of The German Revolution, published by Otto Strasser on August 30, the creation of the Black Front was loudly announced.

"In recent weeks, significant progress has been made in the smelting of a new Germany. The bourgeois bloc of Hugenberg is about to begin to disintegrate. The appearance of a new front will cause a crisis of organizations both on the left and on the right flank. A crisis is about to break out in the KKE and the NSDAP. The collapse will be total. It will hit those who defend this power, as well as those who rush to this power, not wanting to change the system. At the moment, forces are being released in 6 different political camps that want to get rid of the old attitudes and values that are torn from the bond

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You are long-used groupies who are ready to rally around any principles that subvert the system.

Now either red or black will come!

The Red Front (liberal-Marxist front) is international in its spirit, industrial-urban in its form, materialistic in its essence.

The Black Front (conservative-socialist front) is national in its spirit, soldier-peasant in its form, popular in its essence.

The time has come to unite all leading people and active groups. A start has been made: a number of organizations and circles, conservative in spirit and popular in form, strengthened by the revolutionary pain of individuals, united 6 "Black Front".

Strasser was in his repertoire. After reading this proclamation, one might think that it was not his organization that lay in ruins, but the Nazi or Communist Party. So there is nothing surprising in the fact that such appeals, completely devoid of connection with reality, further increased the outflow of people from the Strasserian movement. Among them was Chaimzot, a former board member of the Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists. Immediately after leaving Strasser, he attacked him with the most severe criticism in the magazine "Defender". Heimzot characterized the then position of the "Combat Commonwealth" as "a reserve position of government fascism", and the "Black Front" itself as "a counter-revolutionary and non-socialist organization". At the end of his article, he came to the conclusion that "the fight against the "Combat Commonwealth"

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is a necessity for the same socialist and national reasons as enmity towards the disintegrating Hitlerite party. After giving a detailed overview of the activities of the "Combat Commonwealth" for two years, Haimzot decided to focus his criticism on two points. First, he settled on anti-fascist activities, which did not bring any results. Secondly, he emphasized that the split in the KGRNS did not occur at all for political reasons, but because Strasser made decisions that were beneficial only to him. Several examples were given. Everyone already knows the story of the failed alliance between Strasser and Shtennes' stormtroopers. And here's something interesting that the public didn't know about yet. It turns out that during the peasant revolt, Strasser established contacts with confidants of Erhardt Plaas and Heinz. But more on that a little later.

The criticism was relentless. Heimzot portrayed Stennes and Strasser as puppets of Ehrhardt, who, pulling the strings, created and destroyed political coalitions. It was he, this "gray eminence", who imposed on the revolutionary National Socialists a political line that did not

which had nothing to do with the people's revolution, which pursued only one goal - to destroy the Communist Party.

Ehrhardt's pro-French remarks only added fuel to the fire. For many, including Heimzot, this was proof that the leadership of the revolutionary National Socialists was going to betray German interests and make an alliance with France. Yes, and the conflict between Stennes and Hitler was just a chess game "gross

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Meister" Erhardt, who at all costs wanted to weaken the independent opposition. After he succeeded in expelling the true opposition elements from the Combat Commonwealth, he gained unlimited control over the Strasser group. The Black Front was not just an organization backed by the almost omnipotent Erhardt. This organization was a pawn in the game of the White International, whose main tactical task was to split the revolutionary movement. It was the "White International" that controlled the activities of the "Black Front", directed its struggle against the communists, wanting to put an end to the activity of the KKE. By the way, Scheringer and von Zalomon, who went over to the communist camp, were also agents of the White International. But their task was more modest. They had to gradually destroy the movement from within, forming a special ideology.

To be honest, Chaimzot painted an impressive picture, to match the worldwide conspiracy of Masons and Israelites. And yet, was the "Völkische-anarchist Strasser," as Heimzot called him, a small element of a gigantic conspiracy, a gigantic plan to combat Bolshevism? Was his whole political activity really reduced to deadlocking political groups spanning a wide ideological spectrum, ranging from white counter-revolution to revolutionary anti-capitalism? Heimzot had no doubts about the answer to these questions. Listing the groupings that Strasser had his sights on, he came to an unequivocal conclusion: we must fight with all our might against the Strasserians.

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nie! They say "conservative-revolutionary", but they themselves are counter-revolutionaries. They uplift the "national spirit", but their nationalism is an enlightened poison for true revolutionaries. They proclaim the "soldier-peasant uniform", because only there can their strange ideology find recognition. The revolutionary, the socialist, the national can have only one demand: it is time to put an end to them!"

But before this text spread all over Germany, Strasser published the first issue of the eight-page newspaper Black Front. She came out in the publishing house of the same name, the main shareholders and owners of which were Otto Strasser and his wife. Strasser no longer wanted to take risks and repeat the situation with Oldenburg, when he remained the owner of the German Revolution.

And here, throwing aside Heimzot's conspiracy theories, we still need to ask ourselves the question: where did Strasser get the money not only to register a new publishing house, but also to issue a national newspaper? There is no doubt that Erhardt provided them. Most likely, they appeared as early as May 1931, but, apparently, Strasser decided to keep them. Perhaps that is why he so easily abandoned the German Revolution and the National Socialist Monday Newspaper, leaving one to Oldenburg and the other to Stennes. On the eve of the Second Imperial Congress, four issues of the Black Front were printed. They mainly set out new foreign and domestic policy guidelines, and gave the first organizational instructions. Preparations for the Imperial Congress were in full swing.

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If we take a closer look at these issues of the Black Front, then perhaps we will be able to understand where Otto Strasser decided to direct his organization. In one of the issues, two articles were printed on the first page. The first was devoted to the creation of the "Black Front", and the second talked about the Eastern orientation and future diplomatic relations with the USSR. Here Strasser literally repeated word for word: the idea of four fronts. He declared that the traditional division into left and right would disappear along with the system, against which it was necessary to wage a relentless struggle. The completely rotten system must be replaced by the people's community, which will give all social groups common goals and will. The symbol of the coming popular community was to be the black banner of the conservative revolution. This thesis was illustrated by a quotation from Moeller van den Broek, who gave the black banner the meaning of a mystical standard under which the new crusade of the German Revolution would march. "You [communists. — Approx. author] raised the banner imposed on our country. You have come with a flag, which is just cloth, dyed with the 6th color of soulless blood. You can take off the black-red-gold banner - the flag of the beautiful romantics who created our first Reich. But it has lost its golden luster, which was given to it by dreamy youth. Or do you hold in your hands the black-white-red banner of the Second Reich? Banner, which razbebalos, floating on the oceans of the world, but never stood on solid land. But now a flag is flying over Germany, which is a symbol and an allegory of our present misfortunes.

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This is a flag of need, humiliation and extreme anger. The banner of anxiety of thought, which day and night is centered around one question: what fate awaits our country in this world? The banner of resistance of people who are not going to put up with the process of destruction of the country and people. The banner of the rise of the Germans, who decided to save the nation and find a new Reich.

The same issue dealt with the priorities of the conservative revolution after the collapse of the Weimar Republic. It is noteworthy that Strasser posed one of the main questions: how, by what methods to wipe the communists from power during the revolution? The legacy of the collapsed republic will be heavy, as the victors will get an incredibly strengthened Marxist front, headed by the communists. But under these conditions, it will not be about economic issues, but about a decisive struggle for a new Germany, a war of "reds" against "blacks". This article, sanctioned by the executive committee, has become. for the Berlin opposition, yet another proof of the "fascist aggression" that Strasser was about to launch in the course of the revolution against the communists. They called on the doubters to leave the ranks of the Strasserians, declaring that Strasser's reactionary course had nothing in common with revolutionary National Socialism, and the "14 Theses of the German Revolution" were too insufficient and ambiguous.

Haimzot's article, circulated among the supporters of Strasser who remained in the Combat Commonwealth, caused another split. However, the split is a big word, rather, a small commotion. The thing is

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that the last members of the disbanded youth organization left Strasser. They all joined the Aufbruchkreis (Breakthrough Circle) created by Beppo Remmer. We have already mentioned it somehow. The circle itself appeared in 1931. Its leadership tried to infiltrate nationalist circles, the officer milieu, and paramilitary organizations. There it was supposed to conduct a quiet agitation and recruit new supporters. The tactics paid off in many ways. On July 22, 1931, Rote Fahne published a statement by 13 former officers who had been members of nationalist organizations in the past. Over time, they all fell under the influence of the national revolutionaries, and then, following Richard Scheringer, they followed

Communist Party of Germany. Among the signatories, we could see Rudolf Röhm and Wilhelm Korn, already familiar to us. Incidentally, although they left Strasser's group, they continued to maintain close ties with its left wing. It was they who persuaded the youth to leave the organization.

But Haimzot's article and the departure of the youth did not cause a new crisis and another massive exodus of members. On the contrary, the executive committee was even glad of such a development of events - Strasser finally managed to get rid of the left opposition, which was pretty annoying to him. Now he could completely control the ideology, politics, strategy and tactics of his political sect. In September 1931, the heterogeneity of the movement led by Otto Strasser was brought to an end. At the next imperial congress, the organization was returned to its old name - "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists".

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Looking ahead, I will say that until 1934, the "Combat Commonwealth" remained an obedient tool for implementing the fantastic plans of its leader.

Second Imperial Congress. lasted several days, from 2 to 4 October 1931. It took place in Lauenstein Castle (Upper Franconia). On Friday, October 2, at a joint meeting of the executive committee and the leaders of the military districts, the program and political tactics of the "Combat Commonwealth" were developed, which were approved by the delegates the next day. But this joint meeting was preceded by one incident. The participants in the congress were detained on the border of Thuringia and Bavaria, as they were dressed in the new uniform of the "Black Front" - a black shirt, cap and boots. They had to hastily put on civilian clothes, as there was a ban on wearing uniforms in the country. According to police reports, about 200 people attended the congress. For some time, Lauenstein Castle turned into a stronghold of the conservative revolution. The fact is that in parallel with the Strasserians, Ernst Nikisch's "Resistance" held its congress there.

The Congress itself opened on October 3, 1931. It began with the announcement by Strasser of the main ideas of the Black Front, which had been worked out the day before by the executive committee. "The era of liberalism is fading away, but liberal reaction cannot be destroyed by the liberal revolution of the red front. The future must come not under the sign of liberalism, but under the sign of conservatism, which we will nail to our society. "Black Front" is a front

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conservative revolution. The Black Front is the front of the future; front of fighting youth, workers, soldiers and peasants marching under the black banner. The Black Front is not an organization that one can join and then leave. This is a big secret military alliance, each link of which should share a common attitude, way of thinking and readiness for action.

The basis of the organizational concept of the "Black Front" was taken "Program of Action" Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists, "approved by the congress delegates. This program represented the end point of the theoretical development of revolutionary National Socialism. It included not only the ideas of the 14 Theses of the German Revolution, but also the previously published historical and economic analysis of German society, which confirmed the need to fight against communism even in the event of a tactical alliance with the KKE.

The fact that the adoption of the program took place in extreme haste, not only without criticism, but even, in fact, without discussion, said that all the participants in the congress were appointed by the executive committee. Supporters of the radical socialist line were not allowed to approach the castle for a cannon shot. The trend towards the concentration of power in the hands of the executive committee took on a very concrete shape when Otto Strasser was unanimously elected "supreme leader of the movement." As expected, no one else, except for Strasser himself, applied for this post, so the elections turned out to be uncontested. In addition to the position of "top

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leader" he received from the congress delegates the post of "commander-in-chief" of the revolutionary fighters, who were listed in his personal bodyguard and small detachments of the security service. He also gained direct control over "production cells" and the newly created "Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Youth". Five people were elected to the executive committee of the organization: Otto Strasser, Ernst Buchrucker, Herbert Blank, Hans Wendt and Walter Pagel. In spite of all the measures taken, the composition of the executive committee spoke of the existence even at that moment in Strasserianism of various tendencies. First, the executive committee included people who were personally devoted to Strasser (Buchrucker, Blank). Secondly, Lieutenant Wendt, known for his activity and energy, turned out to be in the highest body of the "Combat Commonwealth". Thirdly, the presence on the executive committee of a supporter of radical actions, Walter Pagel, spoke of a still active left wing that was not going to give up.

Walter Pagel was the Gauleiter of one of the CIRNS organizations, which was distinguished by its sympathy for the KPD. In June 1931, he openly declared that he would leave the organization along with his people if Stennes remained the military chief of the "National Socialist Combat Association of Germany." During the conflict with Oldenburg, he chose to side with Strasser. Pagel became the de facto leader of a group of intellectuals who welcomed the national orientation of the KKE and opposed confrontation with the communists.

On October 3, after lunch, 500 people took part in the congress. To the revolutionary national co

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The socialists were joined by "werewolves", the revolutionary storm troopers of Stennes, representatives of E. Nikisch, the "Action" ("Tat") group and even the "Steel Helmet". Moreover, the latter did not coordinate their actions with the central leadership in any way. Many in the "Steel Helmet" were not satisfied with the alliance with the NSDAP and the anti-Prussian propaganda of Alfred Rosenberg, the main ideologist of the Nazi party,

Strasser and Buchrucker gave each other the floor, after which they spoke about the political situation in the country. Strasser said that when the crisis shakes the Weimar Republic, the government will have only two options: either capitulate to Paris or save the national economy. But both of these exits meant the preservation of the existing system, and therefore could not be a real salvation for Germany. "Salvation can only bring a total revolution, which will be carried out under a black flag 6 economy, culture and public administration!"

The speech itself was a summary of the program of action presented to the delegates that morning, supplemented by Buchrucker's report. He did not hesitate to talk about his anti-communism. Buchrucker proclaimed that he saw no point in discussing with the KPD, since this party was not a national communist party. But even if it did, the Communists would hardly admit they were wrong. They would still be communists, a little different from the others. Buchrucker was convinced that the proletarian revolution would create a state system in which all national wealth would go to the nomenklatura. Revolutionary

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had to redistribute it among all the Germans. As a result, referring to recent events in the political life of Germany, Buchrucker came to the conclusion that the KKE was not capable of carrying out a revolution, especially since the communists would not have a convenient excuse for this. This means that the Rot Front, as an absolutely useless organization, had to dissolve itself, and its members had to go to the camp of the conservative revolution.

On October 4, a small circle of people remained in the castle to discuss internal issues. The delegates present at this closed meeting decided to return the organization to its old name. But it was not just a sign change, it was supposed to change not only the structure of the organization, but also its symbols. The cloth, as before, remained black, but a swastika was added to the hammer and sword, painted in red.

The rest of the discussion concerned the statutory norms. In the "Combat Commonwealth", as before, the way was closed to members of international organizations. It was possible to join the "Combat Commonwealth" only after passing the trial period. It was decided to leave the "battle group" as the main unit of the organization, the leader of which was chosen by its members. The groups were grouped geographically into districts. Top management was in the hands of the executive committee. The chairman of the executive committee was also the chief of the security service. Each lower and middle manager was required to undergo a psychological test, which was supposed to determine whether this or that person was capable of performing responsible functions.

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Having received sufficient funding from Erhardt, Strasser decided that positions of responsibility (political leader, head of security) in the combat districts should be paid. But the incredibly bloated bureaucratic apparatus of the "Combat Commonwealth" only interfered with the political activities of the combat groups. Moreover, after numerous splits, they did not need leaders, but new rank-and-file members. But, according to the leaders, this stratum was to become the vanguard of the people's revolution, so to speak, professional revolutionaries who would lead the opposition groups.

In principle, the imperial congress itself was held for the purpose of promulgating two directives prepared by Strasser. The first concerned domestic consolidation. Despite the pseudo-democratic elections, the Combat Commonwealth was now based on the Fuhrer principle. All important decisions were made by Strasser alone. The second set the political course of the Black Front, which over time was to turn into a mass paramilitary organization.

But the most surprising thing about this congress was that at all the plenary and closed sessions there was a man who by no means could be called a revolutionary. We are talking about Dr. Abegg, State Secretary of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. It was not just an official. This was an official who headed the bureau responsible for fighting right-wing extremism. No less surprising is the fact that none of the "revolutionaries" objected or resented the fact of the presence of "servants".

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inhabitant of the system. How can one not recall the accusations made by Haimzot. Or maybe the movement was really nothing but a product of the Christian-capitalist "White International"? Perhaps Haimzot's reproaches were not at all the product of his wild imagination? Having compared the available facts, the question naturally arises: could not the parties of the center and Brüning, having seen the mortal threat posed by the NSDAP and the KIT,

contribute to the emergence of organizations that were supposed to reduce the influence of the Nazis and communists on the masses? If this was the case, then Strasser's goal was not a popular revolution at all, but an insistent desire to win over the right-wing paramilitarist wing of the nationalist organizations.

When the groups that were to be included in the Black Front began to be listed, the Second Imperial Congress continued the tradition of the First. Among them were the Combat Commonwealth of the Revolutionary National Socialists, the new organization of Walter Stennes, the Werwolf, the Oberland, the Bundische youth groups, the Landvolk peasant movement, the Action group and the Resistance Ern - one hundred Nikish. In his characteristic dreamy manner, Strasser added: The Black Front would attract a section of the Hitlerite party dissatisfied with the liberal leadership. The part that rallied around Gregor Strasser and Count Reventlov. We shall attract to ourselves the greater part of the workers, above all the working youth." Strasser also alluded to connections with people from the Steel Helmet, the Young German Order, and even the Communist Fighting League of Red Fronts.

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But Heimzot, in his article published in the Champion, listed a much smaller number of associations ready to support Otto Strasser. "Strasser chose for the Black Front the revolutionary National Socialists, the revolutionary Landvolk, the revolutionary armed groups, the revolutionary economists from Action, the revolutionary youth groups. But what could he really expect? On the remains of the "Combat Commonwealth". But not to the opposition groups within the Strasser movement, which have not yet opened their eyes to the true nature of Ehrhardt. Not to the Shtennes group, which refused to unite. Not to the western Germany and Bavaria that have covered the devil in the Resistance group of Ernst Nikisch. Not on the "young fighters". He was joined at the congress by groups calling themselves the "revolutionary" Landvolk. But they are not recognized as true peasant revolutionaries who are waging a bitter struggle against the system in Silesia. These groups are even considered harmless by government newspapers. Indeed, the so-called "revolutionary armed groups", such as "Werwolf", have joined. The "revolutionary" economists of Action are just Strasser's fall invention. But neither Werner Keitz nor Hans Ebeling will step on his side. "Revolutionary youth groups"? But all the revolutionary infant-nationalists are in favor of a resolute struggle against the treacherous position of the Black Front.

To a certain extent, Haimzot's criticism was correct. The groups listed by Strasser merely delegated their representatives to his congress.

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But on the other hand, their presence was at least an agreement with a number of ideas expressed by Strasser. In general, historians have poorly studied the process of cooperation between the Black Front and numerous national-Bolshevik, national-revolutionary, paramilitarist, "Völkisch" organizations. So who were the political allies of the Black Front?

Chapter 2 ALLIES AND FELLOW TRAVELERS? "Werwolf" - an alliance of German front-line soldiers.

Werewolf was the organization closest to the revolutionary National Socialists. She was listed as part of the Black Front until December 1933. The term "werewolf" does not mean a werewolf, but "armed wolf". It was borrowed from the German Middle Ages. The first organization with a similar name arose during the Thirty Years' War. This was also the name of the peasant organizations that rebuffed the landsknechts. The new "Werewolf" appeared in 1923. Its creators borrowed from their predecessors the ideas of rapid assistance to the civilian population and active national resistance to the occupiers.

Werewolf was founded in 1925 by the chairman of the Steel Helmet, Theodor Dostenberg. Then it was a youth union that conducted military training and political education for future members of the Steel Helmet. In February of the same year,

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The division had at its disposal 400 groups divided into 26 Gau. They were mainly located in central and western Germany. Already in 1924, the "werewolves" showed their fighting character. Almost immediately, Werewolf became a very active organization. The leaders of the "Werewolf" could not boast of a noble origin. These were former Freikorps, non-commissioned officers and reservists. This is what caused the break in relations with the Steel Helmet. Those from the lower strata were not satisfied that the Steel Helmet defended the interests of the big bourgeoisie and junkers.

On May 12, 1924, the "werewolves" defined their goals as follows: "Werewolf" was born after realizing that all the talk about the humility of the people undermines the resistance offered to the French. We are more than a tough supra-party organization whose activities are aimed at fighting an external enemy. We are a union that, if necessary, will send its members to death in the name of the beloved Fatherland."

As already mentioned, the leadership of the "Werewolf" consisted of former fighters of volunteer corps. The generally recognized leader of the organization was Fritz Kloppe, a former Freiko member, a member of the "National Association of German Officers" banned by the Weimar government. He was born on February 11, 1891. Studied economics, philosophy, German studies in Leipzig and Halle. From 1922 to 1933 he was the permanent editor of the Werewolf newspaper. After Hitler came to power, he became a freelance journalist. Subsequently arrested. Traces of him are lost in one of the concentration camps.

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In 1924-1929, there were 30-40 thousand people in the Werewolf. On the eve of Hitler's rise to power, the number of "werewolves" was reduced to 10,000. The organization was divided into three groups. Young people aged 14-17 were called "young wolves". Boys 17-24 years old - "werewolves". The senior members of the organization united in the so-called "devoted group". The symbol of the organization was a black cloth on which a silver skull was embroidered. The "werewolves" themselves wore gray army uniforms and black-white-red armbands. At the beginning of 1923, with the tacit approval of the Reichswehr, the Werewolf began military training for young people. It was the servicemen who helped this organization to publish the "Military Book of the German Youth", which became an "indispensable tool for military training." The "Military Book" contained a description of light types of weapons: rifles, pistols, light machine guns, hand grenades - that is, the arsenal that could be used during putschs and uprisings.

In 1927, the management of Werewolf decided to make this area of activity the main task of the organization. Now young people were engaged exclusively in military sports. In 1928 a scandal erupted. Police. seized four machine guns, about a hundred rifles, ten thousand cartridges, countless revolvers, grenades, bombs, bayonets and other military ammunition from the "werewolves". Now I had to focus on ideological education, which became a necessary addition to sports activities. The training resulted in the political mobilization of youth, which should

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to join the national liberation struggle in the name of creating a great German people's state. The latter was of a national and social nature, which would make it possible to eliminate class contradictions |

It seemed that the "werewolves" were about ready to start an armed uprising against the Weimar Republic. But when their entire arsenal was confiscated, it became obvious that contacts had to be made with other revolutionary groups. They tried to establish relations with the left wing of the NSDAP. It was from there that the "werewolves" borrowed the slogan about the inevitability of the Third Reich. In this organization, the "mysticism of labor" was simultaneously developing, directed against the leaders of the "Steel Helmet", generals, junkers and nobility of the collapsed Kaiser Germany.

In order to expand the influence of his organization, Fritz Kloppe decided to create in the working areas the so-called "Werwolf Aid", whose members were supposed to help the German unemployed, striking workers, sick and victims of accidents. Their activity was so successful that at some point the "werewolves" even began to issue loans for weddings and funerals. Kloppe called it "practical socialism".

As already mentioned, in 1927 "Werwolf" began to systematically propagandize the National Socialist Third Reich and introduce the idea of creating a people's community to the masses. Agitation "werewolves" called for a fight against capitalism, plutocracy and reaction. In 1928, the leitmotif of this group was radical anti-capitalism, multiplied by anti-Semitism. When the world broke out

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the economic crisis, the socialist and anti-capitalist component of their ideology has increased significantly. But in 1930-1933, many "werewolves", impressed by Hitler's political successes, left the organization and joined the NSDAP. At this time, the Werwolf leadership, still dreaming of an armed revolution, again realized the need to search for revolutionary allies. At first, Kloppe drew attention to the left wing of the NSDAP, but then moved closer to the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". Since July 1930, "werewolves" have been attending all the events of the Strasserians. At the same time, they are trying to cooperate with the Oberland and other anti-capitalist nationally oriented organizations. Recognizing the "14 Theses of the German Revolution", the "werewolves" published their own manifesto, close in spirit to the ideological constructions of the revolutionary national socialists. The "werewolf" organization itself was described as "a fighting movement created by front-line soldiers", which is distinguished by four virtues: fearlessness, camaraderie, self-control and sacrifice. Based on these "virtues", the spirit of combat readiness was to result in war, which would be the last opportunity for a just solution of the German question. Like many anti-capitalist and anti-parliamentary groups, "Werwolf" was an alliance oriented towards an aristocratic state, where social revolutionaries were to become the new elite, the aristocracy. German freedom could only be achieved after defeating the international financial oligarchy,

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supranational freemasonry, transnational corporations. Communism could be eradicated only if the people realized their roots. The ideals of "blood and soil" were the basis of the life force of the people, a kind of racially monolithic community in which there was no place for class contradictions. The "werewolves" program provided for the socialization of banks and support for the middle class, whose main enemies were Marxism and usurious capitalism. The inequality of the Germans will be destroyed, and each of them will receive his share of the national wealth. At the same time, the new state will protect

national solidarity. The social revolution was supposed to be carried out with the active support of the trade unions. It is this political attitude that explains why the "werewolves" began to infiltrate all trade union organizations in order to stand shoulder to shoulder with the workers of factories and factories during strikes and strikes. The ultimate goal of such propaganda activity is an armed uprising, in which trade unions, freikorps, youth and paramilitary organizations were supposed to take part.

In general, this group characterized their views as national-revolutionary. But in fairness, let's say: in the ideological sphere, "Werwolf" stood closer to Strasser than to the national revolutionaries or the Nazis. The "werewolves" who remained in the organization resolutely denied the legal path to power offered by Hitler. In 1930, the relationship between Strasser and Kloppe was built as privileged, so to speak, leader to leader. While "Werwolf" and "Combat Commonwealth

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in" acted as equal partners. "Werewolves" were present at all the events of the GRNC, and the Strasserians attended all meetings of the "werewolves".

The Werwolf enthusiastically received the news of the unification of the Strasser and Stennes groups. At the Second and Third Imperial Congresses, Kloppe's supporters were no longer present as guests of honor, but as an integral part of the Black Front. Very little is known about the activities of the "werewolves" during this period. It was established that they, together with the Strasserians, repulsed the raids of the Nazi attack aircraft. In 1932, they initiated the creation of the "Black Guard", which in some German states consisted only of "werewolves".

The break between the "Werwolf" and the "Combat Commonwealth" occurred on November 27, 1932 at a meeting in Eisleben. At this event, Fritz Kloppe, realizing that his organization was significantly weakened, and hundreds of wards were leaving for the SA and the NSDAP, decided to transform Werwolf into a new revolutionary party. She had to take part in the elections and win over the nationally minded Germans. Hitler's rise to power took the Werewolves by surprise. Until March 1933, they behaved extremely cautiously, they waited. Only then Kloppe decided to support the new regime and swore allegiance to Hitler. In the summer of 1933, the "werewolves" were merged into the SA, and the "young wolves" ended up in the Hitler Youth. For some time, Fritz Kloppe was even an SA Standartenführer. Fearing for his life, he and his "werewolves" severed all ties with Strasser. But this did not save the leadership of the organization. It was arrested and perished in the concentration camps.

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unification of Germany. When the "National Socialist Combat Association of Germany" collapsed, the paths of Strasser and Stennes did not part - they continued to cooperate. Stennes created from his supporters the "Independent National Socialist Combat Association of Germany". But by this he could not liquidate the crisis. If in May 1931 there were about 8500 attack aircraft under his command, of which 1500 were in Berlin, 2000 were in Brandenburg, 3000 were in Silesia, 2000 were in Pomerania, then at the time of the creation of the Independent Association, he could only count on 3.5 thousand people. At the end of 1931, his organization was actually halved. At first, the leadership of the new association consisted of Stennes himself and his right hand, Ernst Wetzel. But soon Wetzel emigrated to South America. His flight caused a massive exodus of prominent stormtroopers from the Independent Association. Almost all SA Standartenführers, who left the NSDAP with Stennes, had returned to Hitler by this time. Many stormtroopers chose to join other paramilitary groups. Stennes began to show a lack of leading personnel, and, in fact, there was no one to lead. The 40 sections of the Stennes organization covered 1,500 people, of which only four hundred stormtroopers were active in politics. If

look at the geography of their activities, one could see that they were located where the strongholds of the revolutionary SA had already existed: in Silesia, Brandenburg, Pomerania.

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The weakening of the Stennes group was caused by three factors. First, in Berlin, the stormtroopers preferred to follow the new local political authorities, whose popularity and fame were predetermined by the jiu-jitsu clubs they led. Secondly, some of the leaders from Stennes' entourage joined. to Strasser, deciding to join the Black Front. Thirdly, the most important cause of the crisis was the conflict between Stennes and Erhardt. Considering the political weight of Stennes, the captain decided to stop giving him financial assistance. But this only affected the financial support of the leadership of the Independent Association. Ehrhardt, as before, continued to promote the publication of the National Socialist Monday Newspaper and even found a way to pay the editors of this publication. But over time, Erhardt urged the editors to leave the ranks of the revolutionary stormtroopers and rename the newspaper. The new herald published by Shtennes became known as the Front of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. But this was clearly not enough for active propaganda activities.

The Stennes organization was doomed. Its members either returned to the NSDAP or joined the stronger Strasser faction. In October 1931, Stennes tried to negotiate with Ernst Röhm and Hitler about his own return to the Nazi Party. But in Munich they did not even want to talk to the "police spy". In March 1932, the pitiful remnants of the once strong Stennes group continued their activities within the framework of the "Klaus Heim Committee", which in fact

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began automatic membership in the Black Front. By this time, Shtennes represented the interests of twenty people, on whom the Nazi SA launched a uniform hunt. Fearing for his life, on September 16, 1932, Stennes wrote to Reich Chancellor Papen¹ a letter asking for state protection. But a few months later, Hitler came to power.

In February 1933, Shtennes was captured and placed in a "special prison". From imminent death he was saved by an old friendship with Hermann Goering, who decided to save his old comrade. Once free, Shtennes decided not to tempt fate and immediately emigrated to China. He was much more fortunate there than in Germany. In China, he led the Life Guards of Chiang Kai-shek. On this in the biography of Walter Stennes one could put

¹ Franz von Papen (1879-1969), German politician, diplomat, was born December 29, 1879 in Werl (Westphalia) into a family of a large landowner. Before World War I, he was an officer of the General Staff. In 1913 - 1915. - Military attache in the United States, from where he was expelled for espionage and subversive activities. In 1921 - 1932. - Member of the Prussian Landtag from the Catholic Center Party, adjoined its extreme right wing. In July-November 1932, he headed the government, which contributed to the strengthening of the position of the Nazis in Germany. He took an active part in the establishment in January 1933 of the Nazi dictatorship and entered Hitler's first cabinet as Vice-Chancellor. July 1934-March 1938 - Ambassador to Austria contributed to the implementation of the Anschluss. As ambassador to Turkey in 1939-1944, von Papen sought to draw her into the ranks of Germany's allies. In April 1945 he was arrested in the Ruhr by the military administration of the 9th US Army. In 1946 he appeared before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, but was acquitted. However, in February 1947 he again appeared before the commission

denazification and sentenced to 8 months in prison as a war criminal. He died on May 2, 1969 in Obersasbach, Baden.

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point, if not for the information that has surfaced recently. It turns out that the leader of the rebel stormtroopers has been cooperating with Soviet intelligence since the early 1930s.

Here is an intriguing testimony of the legendary intelligence officer Pavel Sudoplatov: "Contact was restored with a valuable agent under the pseudonym Friend (shortly before the fascist attack on the USSR), who was brought to cooperation ten years ago, being the deputy chief of Rem's attack aircraft. He was considered an influential person in Hitler's circle. And then he was appointed as a political adviser to the chief military adviser of fascist Germany at the headquarters of Chiang Kai-shek. There he regularly met with Sorge..." And so the new essence of Walter Shtennes was revealed.

Throughout the war, Stennes supplied Soviet intelligence with important operational information, skillfully resisted the attempts of German diplomats and intelligence officers to push Chiang Kai-shek towards a capitulatory peace with Japan. Collaboration with Drug was not limited to obtaining valuable information (which, by the way, Shtennes provided absolutely free of charge). When in the summer of 1940 the Japanese spread provocative rumors about the extensive interference of the USSR in the affairs of China on the side of Chiang Kai-shek, in particular, the arrival of 1000 Soviet pilots, Koreans by nationality, in the Chinese Air Force, "Drug" as the official representative of the Generalissimo met with journalists accredited to the central Chinese government from many countries, the report of his press conference, transmitted by a TASS correspondent in Shanghai, was published in

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Pravda on June 3, 1940. Refuting reports of a "large number of Soviet commanders and political instructors" in the Chinese army, Shtennes emphasized that "there are no foreigners now" in the ranks of the troops fighting the Japanese, and besides, the Chinese do not need them. yutsya. In the early 1950s, Stennes came to Germany and settled with his sister in the British zone of occupation. His wife received a large inheritance, and Stennes again plunged headlong into politics. Since the end of 1951, he began to publish at his own expense an information political weekly, designed for large industrialists and bankers. This publisher defined his own political goals as the struggle for the economic revival of Germany with a complete rejection of its militarization.

One way or another, but the entry of Stennes into the "Black Front" was inevitable. However, for Strasser, this no longer mattered.

"Resistance" E. Nikisch and the union "Oberland". Strasser developed special relations with the Oberland union and its ideologist Ernst Nikisch, who at first adhered to the national revolutionary, and then the national Bolshevik views.

At one time, the volunteer corps "Oberland" was created to fight against the Bavarian Soviet Republic. Then it was used to suppress the workers' uprising in the Ruhr and protect the Polish-German border. Later, members of the Oberland took an active part in the 1923 beer putsch. This fact and constant armed conflicts with the Poles led to

the fact that the victorious countries in an ultimatum demanded to disband this volunteer corps. But the former fries

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cows did not want to leave politics. Almost immediately after the prohibition of this corps, they reunited in an alliance with the same name. But they had to continue their activities in an illegal position - the Bavarian state government immediately banned this organization.

The Oberland was a very motley and heterogeneous organization. This is what caused the numerous splits that constantly shook the union. In 1925, some of its members went to the Steel Helmet. In 1929, many activists chose to join the NSDAP. The Oberland finally collapsed when Prince Ernst Rüdiger von Staremborg was elected chairman in December 1930. Supporters of the revolutionary line who disagreed with this went to Hitler. Other, more radical elements created the Active Partnership.

The "Oberland Partnership" - the circle "Resistance" was headed by Sondermann, Drexel and Treger. But in their hands was only the administration. The ideological sphere was completely controlled by Ernst Nikisch. The "ideological mobility" of the latter led to a rapprochement with Otto Strasser. But it was precisely the marked mobility and susceptibility of Nikisch to new ideas that became the causes of the conflict with the "supreme leader" of the Black Front. In 1931, Richard Schapke cited in his book The Black Front a program drawn up by Nikisch. He considered her a role model. In his opinion, this document almost completely coincided with the theses put forward by the Black Front.

According to Nikisch's views, his "Resistance"

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was supposed to completely transform the political life of Germany. He put forward the following maxim: "turning one's gaze to the East and its uncomplicated values; resolute rejection of the comforts lauded by Europe". New Germ. niya had to isolate itself from the world economy and create its own production system, predetermined by domestic demand, as well as the needs of neighboring, European, but even more distant, Asian states. All imports from the Versailles victorious countries must cease. The new economic and social policy should bring the urban population back to rural life. This would mark the beginning of "internal colonization". One of the main political tasks was the "collective recognition of the rural way of life." From young people Nikisch demanded strict obedience, submission, Spartan life and all types of "male virtue". The new national pride was to be characterized by a "simple lifestyle opposed to the refined life of the Western powers. To prepare for this titanic spiritual upheaval, the rejection of the ideas of humanism and the recognition of barbarism were required. The authoritarian, arch-disciplined existence of man was supposed to create restrictive conditions that would subordinate the individual will to the new social order and its values. Private property in the spirit of Roman law must be abolished. "You can be an owner to the extent that property is a means and tool for achieving freedom, self-affirmation and the whiteness of your people." Econo

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The religious and social forms which, since 1918, have enjoyed the support of the Order of Versailles must also be abolished. Supreme ownership of all land, all natural resources, all enterprises should be owned by the state alone. Nikisch was much more radical than Strasser in formulating demands for the nationalization of banks and the introduction of a monopoly in foreign trade. But in general, the programs were similar. Exactly this

This circumstance made it possible to consider the "Oberland Partnership" - the "Resistance" circle as potential allies of the "Black Front".

There is no doubt that the members of the Oberland were completely independent of the Combat Commonwealth. It is equally indisputable that, despite the quarrel between Strasser and Nikisch, they positively assessed the possibility of creating a national revolutionary anti-Hitler front that could cooperate with the communists. Sondermann and Drexel, who consistently defended the positions of Arthur Meller van den Broek, his ideas of creating the "Third Reich", watched the actions of the Strasser organization with undisguised sympathy. The Oberland stands under a black banner, a symbol of fierce and resolute resistance, a symbol of the will to freedom. The Oberland is waging a struggle against the hypocritical ideas of humanism and civilization, against liberalism, parliamentarism, and bourgeois fascism. The Oberland will fight all the defenders of the Versailles order. The Oberland is ready to unite with all the brothers of Versailles, wherever they may be.

Rapprochement between Oberland and Combat

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what's the big deal

friendship" took place against the background of the recognition that both groups held similar ideological views, opposed the Versailles system and aspired to revolutionary socialism. Both organizations felt themselves involved in the world of "builders of a new reality", and therefore the Oberland Partnership, not forgetting significant worldview differences, nevertheless took part in the activities of the Strasserians. But after the last attempt to establish a productive joint activity ended in failure (for example, the nomination of a single candidate for the post of Reich President Klaus Heim), friendly relations were limited to formal support. After 1933, the members of the Oberland, unlike the revolutionary National Socialists, were not subjected to any political persecution. This can only be explained by one fact - Hitler never considered the Oberland as part of the Black Front.

Chapter 3

LANDSFOLK IS THE LAST HOPE OF THE BLACK FRONT

When trying to analyze the social composition of the Black Front, the sphere of its real influence, sooner or later we had to face one problem. What was the role of the "Black Front" in the development of the revolutionary peasant movement? One could also ask questions: did the revolutionary National Socialists have

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attitude to the wave of rural terrorism? To what extent did the radical peasant organizations collaborate with the National Revolutionaries and the National Socialist Left? Was the Black Front's special agrarian ideology a tactical ploy? But first things first.

As early as 1927, the first signs of a widespread crisis in agriculture appeared in Germany, the causes of which were chronic overproduction of products and falling prices for it. Relatively low prices for agricultural products ruined peasant farms, driving them into debt bondage. Thus, for example, the debt in Schleswig-Holstein on January 1, 1928 for farms of less than 100 hectares was 321 million marks, and for farms of 100-200 hectares - about 300 million marks, for large farms - 54 million. Schleswig-Holstein was one of the states most affected by the agricultural crisis. The fall in prices for animal products (milk, meat) already at the end of 1926 led to the confiscation and sale at auction of some peasant farms. This happened because the local banks wanted to repay their loans by all means. Economic crisis

1929 led to a banking collapse. Now the threat of complete ruin hung over the peasantry. In the period 1926-1932 ONLY IN THIS land, banks requisitioned 683 plots with a total area of 14,000 hectares. Willy-nilly, the rural population came to the idea that it was necessary to fight for their existence. Hoping to draw the attention of the government to their problems and somehow get out of poverty, the

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Styane decided to resort to methods of political pressure. But the traditional peasant organizations failed to get the state government of Schleswig-Holstein to stop the confiscation and accrual of debts. Realizing that by acting in the usual ways, it is unlikely that they will be able to solve the accumulated problems, the peasants took to the streets.

In the winter of 1928, the peasant opposition rallied around two men, Klaus Heim and Wilhelm Hamkens. They called for organizing a referendum. But this idea quickly had to be abandoned, and the peasant leaders proclaimed the slogan "Help yourself." Imagine the astonishment of political observers when these two men led 140,000 peasants to a protest demonstration on January 28, 1929. To continue the pressure on the government, the radical part of the peasantry united in an organization called the Landfolk Union (Country People). It was headed by generally recognized leaders, Heim and Hamkens. Who were these people?

Klaus Heim left for the USA at the beginning of 1914, where he worked as a livestock breeder in various southern states. In 1920, at the age of 32, he returned to his homeland, where he inherited the St. Anna farm, which belonged to his father. During his stay in America, he learned about the revolution and armed battles in southern Germany. Life in the States made Him an ardent nationalist. Immediately after returning to Germany, he joined the "Pan-German League".

Wilhelm Hamkens was born in 1896. In 1914 he volunteered for the front. During the World War he rose to the rank of officer. After the howl

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We joined the Steel Helmet. Later, he became close with the "werewolves" and members of the Tannenberg alliance.

In 1928, the activities of the Landvolk association were more corporate than political. First of all, it was about the creation of "Help for the Needy", which was supposed to impede the holding of auctions and interfere with the work of bailiffs. Klaus Heim urged the government to limit imports of agricultural products and give preference to local products sold in local markets. Equating the debt of the peasants to the German reparations paid to the allies, he insisted on the joint control of the state and the peasants over the activities of banks.

In early 1928, the prices of potatoes, pork, and milk fell again. The situation in the countryside has become simply unbearable. But then the peasants hoped that the situation could be corrected after the elections to the Reichstag. However, Landvolk received only 0.3% of the vote and, of course, did not get into parliament. Discontent resulted in mass demonstrations, which were initially organized by the leaders of the old peasant organizations. But the preferences of the villagers quickly changed. They were inspired by the ideas of Hamkens and Heim, who did not place any hope in the coalition government of Müller, formed on July 28, 1928. At that time, the social democrats and centrists did not care about the ruined peasantry. Supported by the left

wing of the German People's National Party, the peasants launched an attack on the government, which, torn by contradictions, could not start normal work.

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. For half a year, from January to July 1928, Heim and Hamkens met with people and worked out a common political line and tactics of struggle against the government. Hamkens insisted on uniting the existing peasant groups on the basis of the "Völkisch" ideology, which, while rejecting parliamentarism, assumed the creation of an authoritarian state. It was the new state that was supposed to take care of the creation of a new agriculture. But by and large, such ideological attitudes did not provide for a fundamental change in the state mechanism itself. It was a synthesis of the most striking anti-democratic, nationalist and anti-Semitic themes that were constantly expressed by the members of the Steel Helmet, the "werewolves", the members of the Tannenberg.

To demonstrate a symbolic will to unity, in the autumn of 1928 the entire peasant movement in Schleswig-Holstein was given the name "Landvolk". At first, Hamkens attacked only the authorities. His agitation had a distinctly racist connotation. This was predetermined by Heim's close ties with Ayudendorf, and Hamkens with the Tannenberg alliance. The members of this association, who lived in Schleswig-Holstein, formed the backbone of the Landvolk. Already in its first leaflets, the new movement emphasized the need to fight the Jewish-parliamentary system and corruption in government. The members of the Landvolk categorically rejected "fratricidal class struggle".

So, the main goal of the "Landvolk" was the struggle against treaties and obligations that destroy

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e0 7) the peasantry was transformed, passing it into the hands of the oligarchs. "Landfolych was supposed to unite society, as happened in 1914. But now the reason for unity had to be non-cooperation with the system. According to the views of Heim and Hamkens, the corruption of the system was only a reflection of the Jewish poisonous spirit that permeated newspapers, theater, and literature. For them, the Jews were the main enemies. To stop their corrupting action, all Jews had to be isolated. Making the cornerstone of its ideology the concept of "nationality, which was a combination of consanguinity and race, German family and culture, Landvolk was going to fight for free German space and free German property. At least the slogan borrowed from the time of the anti-Danish uprising spoke of the radical nature of this peasant movement: "Schleswig-Holstein will be washed by the sea." But "Landvolk" was not. organized movement. He didn't even have a single regular speaker. They were replaced by "trusted persons" from among the personal friends of Hamkens, who conducted cautious agitation among the peasantry. It was only at the beginning of 1929 that the Landvolk Newspaper was published, which became the official publication of this movement.

Thanks to spontaneity, ideological and organizational mobility, Landvolk was able to unite not only local "Völkisch" groups, but also most of the previously existing peasant organizations, for example, the very authoritative Peasant Union. At the end of August 1928, mass demonstrations began again in the east of the country. On

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this time the actions were aimed at organizing a "tax strike". It was supposed to be a passive form of resistance, expressed in the refusal to pay taxes.

But Klaus Heim was no longer satisfied with such methods of struggle - he called for more decisive action. He believed that the time had come to start an armed struggle with the state, which

did not hesitate to use force against the peasants. Heim began by gathering around him the most active and categorically minded people, from whom in the summer of the same year he formed the "Youth Defense of the Northern March" and the "Guard Association". These groups were built along military lines and consisted entirely of extremist elements. For the most part, these were former members of the Steel Helmet or the Ehrhardt Brigade, who were not the first to hold weapons in their hands and rebuff the police. The official press equated the creation of armed groups with the passive resistance of tax evaders. For her, all this was a dangerous subversive activity. But the peasants themselves, of course, did not share this point of view. Even rather moderate peasant organizations hoped that the radicals would be able to somehow improve living conditions.

villagers.

Over time, the Landvolk movement went far beyond the regional boundaries of Schleswig-Holstein. It passed its "political school" already in Silesia, Saxony and Bavaria. The elections to the Saxon Landtag showed that the demands of the peasant radicals could influence the entire community.

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rational politics. But in March 1929, Hamkens made an unforgivable mistake. He called on the members of Help for the Needy to openly fight against the state. Moreover, he expressed the idea of separating from Berlin and forming his own, peasant, government.

This careless remark gave the government an excuse to arrest the leaders of Relief for the Needy. They were accused of treason. In exchange for the release of the leaders of the peasant resistance, the government demanded an end to the demonstrations. It was an undeniable victory for the government. In Schleswig-Holstein, not only Landvolk events were banned, but also the NSDAP and the KPD. But it was a Pyrrhic victory. Such a "solution" to the problem further increased the discontent of the peasant masses. It was at that time that the well-known national revolutionary Bruno von Salomon joined the peasant movement. He began collaborating with the Landvolk newspaper as early as March 1929. His articles, full of hatred and indignation, were very popular. among the peasants. Landvolk gained new supporters. This was evidenced at least by the fact that the Landvolk Newspaper, literally at the wave of a wand, turned from a weekly into a daily publication, the circulation of which reached 9,000 copies. Without hiding, von Salomon called for an attack on the state, which was leading the country to the abyss.

Intellectuals who sympathized with the peasant movement hoped that by resorting to repressive policies, the state would form a political consciousness among the peasants. They saw this as the key to their success.

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"national revolution". In October 1929, the number of subscribers to the Landvolk Newspaper alone reached 10,000. It is very difficult to establish how many were sold from hand. It can safely be said that it has become the most influential media outlet in Schleswig-Holstein. Numerous bans on the sale of the Landvolk newspaper, and the prosecution of peasants who refused to pay taxes, only increased the desire to overthrow the hated republic. The extremist wing of Landvolk grew by leaps and bounds. Now the ideology of the movement began to spread among the entire peasantry. It was no longer just a set of nationalistic phrases, but a fully developed mature worldview. Of course, this would not have happened so quickly if it were not for the help of the von Salomon brothers and many other opposition intellectuals. They not only maintained ties with the peasant movement, but became its functionaries, continuing their systematic criticism of the authorities and the state.

Thus, for example, one lawyer who specialized in defending right-wing radicals turned the lawsuit against the peasants into a spectacle, into a farce, into a people's tribunal against the system. The ideas of the peasant movement voiced at the trial not only strengthened the Landvolk, but also dealt a tangible blow to the Weimar Republic. But the court was unyielding. In March 1929, the regional court in Flensburg sentenced Hamkens to a large monetary fine. Without suspecting it, the judges turned Wilhelm Hamkens into a national hero, a peasant martyr, which further strengthened Landvolk. He became famous throughout the country.

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Gradually, all radical and extremist organizations paid attention to the unrest in Schleswig-Holstein. They saw in the opposition peasant movement excellent ground for planting their ideology. These regions were almost immediately filled with propagandists from the Steel Helmet, the NSDAP, the KPD, the Young German Order, and the German People's Freedom Party. According to the von Salomon brothers, Ehrhardt himself tried more than once to contact the peasant leaders. In 1929, everyone sympathized with Landvolk, from the former Chancellor Kuno to Hitler, from Hugenberg to the leaders of the Pan-German League, from the Werewolves to the leaders of the Consul organization. Thanks to their support, Landvolk became widely known, its actions were followed throughout Germany. Hamkens managed to break out of his region. With this instigation, Friedrich Döpner set up a branch of the Landvolk in East Prussia, and Friedrich Glöckner in Silesia. In April 1929, the leaders of the peasant movement adopted the ultra-racist ideas of the writer Kenstler. His journal Blood and Soil was very popular in Thuringia. Meanwhile, the nonviolent resistance preached by Hamkens was supplanted by extremism, on which Bruno von Salomon and Klaus Heim were betting. Von Salomon was firmly convinced that the massive demonstrations that took place over the arrest of Hamkens could at one moment turn into an armed uprising. His expectations did not disappoint. In some places, peasants armed with scythes and pitchforks attacked police stations. To coordinate their actions, in the summer

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1929 Bruno von Salomon met with Ernst Junger, Ernst Nikisch, Bodo Uze. They had to call on their supporters to support the movement of Klaus Heim in every possible way. But Heim and Hamkens viewed political violence differently. The moderate wing of the Landvolk, led by Hamkens, after the trial of the Aid to the Needy, did not want to give the government a reason to persecute the peasant movement. Heim saw things differently. He believed that terror and direct action would bring about the collapse of the system faster than boycotts and refusal to pay taxes.

After the police seized 50 kilograms of dynamite and 700 detonators in the town of Mühlheim in January 1929, Klaus Heim was forced to go underground. This was no mere coincidence. The extremists from Landvolk, with the support of Ehrhardt's Consul, were going to organize the production of bombs. But the police measures were insufficient. In April 1929, the first assassination attempt took place. Unknown people threw grenades at the Landvolk's opponents. On May 23, an explosion occurred in the land bureau of the town of Itzehoe. On June 3, a bomb exploded in the financial department of Oldenburg. On September 6, explosions rocked many administrative buildings in Schleswig-Holstein. On September 9, the police began mass arrests, and almost all the prominent figures of the Landvolk found themselves under police surveillance. The police were able to identify 35 bombers. Among those arrested was Klaus Heim. The government, not embarrassed in means and methods, was going to put an end to terrorism.

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In 1930, the trial of the peasant bombers began. He turned Klaus Heim into a cult figure. He was revered not only in national revolutionary circles, but also among

communists and the Nazis. But already in January 1930, the peasantry in the north of the country lost its former unity. The Landvolk movement was split. On one side of the scale were the "moderates" of Wilhelm Hamkens; on the other "frantic" Klaus Heim. Among the extremists, the idea of national revolutionaries and revolutionary national socialists was most widespread. But, having lost its leader, the radical wing collapsed very quickly. Heim's supporters joined extremist parties that were close to them in spirit.

If we consider the development of events, there is nothing surprising in the fact that the Schleswig Holstein peasants were more and more willing to vote in elections for radical organizations that did not recognize the Weimar Republic. The invariable favorites here were the KIG and the NSDAP. This dual political challenge by extremist forces backed by ordinary peasants has effectively led to the disappearance of many moderate parties from the German political landscape. There is no doubt that, being in the "zone of influence" of the communists and Nazis, the peasant movement eventually ceased to carry out its own actions. This suited the KPD and the NSDAP, but not the national revolutionaries, who wanted to preserve the originality of the "Landvolk".

As we remember, after the re-establishment of the Nazi Party in 1925, Gregor Strasser was placed in charge of propaganda in the North

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Noah Germany. The Schleswig-Holstein organization of the NSDAP was also under his leadership. At that time, the National Socialists were never heard of in this German land. Gregor Strasser, even a year later, did not manage to achieve any significant success here. Party groups arose only in three cities: Kiel, Neumünster and Altona. At the end of 1926, the area came under the control of Gauleiter Heinrich Lohse, a bank clerk from Altona who had previously worked as a propagandist for the German People's Party. He turned out to be a very good organizer. In just a year, he managed to cover the entire Schleswig-Holstein with a network of party groups and even form several assault detachments. The fall in prices for agricultural products was an excellent occasion to use this sore subject in party propaganda. In 1927, the Nazis traveled all over Schleswig-Holstein, holding campaign rallies. This propaganda rally ended on December 10, 1927. The final chord was to be a meeting in Hamburg, at which Hitler himself was supposed to speak.

The peasant demonstrations of 1928 finally undermined the credibility of traditional rural unions. They could no longer lead the peasants. Gregor Strasser decided to use this circumstance to attract new members to the NSDAP. The peasant movement could be used not only to criticize the Weimar Republic, but also to seize power. From January to May 1928, Gregor organized more than 250 meetings in Schleswig-Holstein, attended by such authors.

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old National Socialists like Count Reventlow, Frick and, of course, Strasser himself. They brought a certain result: the number of National Socialists in this land tripled, reaching two thousand people. But the elections to the Reichstag, in which the NSDAP in Schleswig-Holstein received only 4%, showed that these measures were not enough for political success. Realizing the mistakes, Strasser decided to go directly to the villages and villages. It was absolutely the right decision. Already in the elections to the Prussian Landtag, the NSDAP received a significantly larger number of votes. In the district of Dithmarschen North, 17.7% voted for her, in South Dithmarschen - 17.2%, in Steinburg - 10.2%. The results of the elections strengthened Strasser's intention to continue his propaganda activities among the villagers, which culminated in a rally in Haider, where Hitler addressed 10,000 peasants.

In November 1928, Landvolk began to interfere with the development of the NSDAP in this region. As a result, it was decided to openly criticize the ideas of Hamkens. On January 1, 1929, the first issue of the Schleswig-Holstein Gazette, published by the local Nazis, came out. This publication was supposed to compete with the Landvolk Newspaper.

On March 7, 1929, a Nazi demonstration clashed with local communists in Dithmarschen. A fight broke out between the stormtroopers and members of the KKE. As a result, two attack aircraft were killed, 30 were injured. The funeral was supposed to turn into another political performance. To protect them, Hitler mobilized 6,000 men from the SA and the Steel Helmet. Liu mass

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dey, dressed in military uniform, and the "bloody night" served as a catalyst for the discontent of the peasantry. The scales of public opinion swung in the direction of the NSDAP. Just a few days after the funeral, about 500 people joined the NSDAP. By the end of April 1929, the Schleswig-Holstein Nazi party organization numbered 8,500 people, of which 2,300 were in the assault squads. The Schleswig-Golpstein Gauleiter decided to keep Heinrich Lohse. It is noteworthy that he coordinated any appointments not with Gregor Strasser, but with the Munich leadership, not allowing a single leftist element, not a single exponent of socialist ideas, to leadership positions.

The world economic crisis of 1929 had catastrophic consequences for German agriculture. The NSDAP decided to take advantage of the mass ruin of the peasants and stepped up propaganda in rural areas. The peasants were all drawn to the Nazi party. In December 1929, the NSDAP numbered 10 thousand people here, in the spring of 1930 - 12 thousand, in September 1930 - 14 thousand. The Strasser split had no effect on the positions of the Nazis in Schleswig-Holstein. Local party functionaries were initially loyal to Hitler and supported the Munich party leadership. In preparation for the September elections to the Reichstag, they held over a thousand rallies. The results were not long in coming - the NSDAP received 240,288 votes here, that is, 27%. Not satisfied with what had been achieved, the Nazis continued to increase their propaganda activity. It was here that they received an absolute majority in the elections.

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stvo (506,117 votes cast for the NSDAP, out of 992,568 voters). In small villages, even more impressive results awaited them - 63.8%. But a truly triumphant success came to the NSDAP in coastal villages - 80% of the votes were cast for the Nazis.

It should not be assumed that only the NSDAP made a political breakthrough in Schleswig-Holstein. The communists also had success, although more modest. The KKE managed to establish its bases in some small villages. As one would expect, both laborers and poor peasants became their support. In the KKE and the Comintern, an alliance between peasants and workers has always been discussed as an objective prerequisite for seizing power and building a socialist society. In 1924, an attempt was even made to create a special Peasants' International. In February 1927, on the initiative of the communists, the Imperial Peasant Union was created, the main task of which was pro-Soviet agitation and anti-imperialist propaganda. The peasant organizations of the communists enjoyed a certain recognition even from the government. This is evidenced by the fact that on March 27 their representatives were invited to participate in the work of the European Peasants' Committee, whose meeting was held in Berlin.

As we remember, at the end of 1927 an agricultural crisis began in Germany, in which the Comintern saw an excellent opportunity to start an active anti-fascist struggle and

formation of an alliance of workers and peasants. But in this context, it was not about countering the NSDAP or other

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to the nationalist groupings, but about the struggle against the bourgeois parties, above all against the social democrats.

In 1931 a number of well-known national revolutionaries joined the ranks. KKE. Among them were Bruno von Salomon and Bodo Uze. Since in 1929-1931 they constantly communicated with the peasants, they rendered an invaluable service to the communists, contributing to the creation of numerous village committees, which were led by the Imperial Peasants' Union. On May 16, 1931, on their own initiative, E. Thalmann announced the "Program of Assistance to the Peasantry". It contained a number of social and economic demands aimed at improving the life of the small and middle peasantry: debt relief, the abolition of dues in favor of large landowners, state support for working peasants, the issuance of benefits to the sick and pensioners, and the introduction of a guardianship system for the unemployed.

The Peasant Committee simultaneously with the preparation of the peasant program initiated the protest action. The peasants who joined it demanded the release of Klaus Heim, convicted of preparing terrorist acts. The Communists defiantly expressed their solidarity with Heim and the Landvolk, but only in regard to the actions of resistance to the confiscation of land and the forced sale of land plots. But after the Communists refused to support the candidacy of Klaus Heim in the elections of the Reich President, this alliance collapsed. Moreover, such a decision caused serious controversy within the National Revolutionary and National Bolshevik groups.

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But this did not undermine the position of the KKE among the peasantry. The first congress of the "Imperial Peasants' Union" was attended by about 160 delegates nominated by various peasant associations. Unlike the Nazis, who attracted peasants to join their party, the communists used the tactics of infiltration, penetration into already existing associations and unions. But the fact that none of the supporters of Hamkens and Heim took part in the congress only spoke of the loss by the communists of their positions in Schleswig-Holstein. But Landvolk itself was torn apart by internal contradictions. Its members went to the KPD and the NSDAP. The strong positions of these parties actually did not allow either the National Revolutionaries or the Strasserians to pursue their own independent policy towards the peasantry. But be that as it may, the revolutionary National Socialists managed to find mutual understanding with Landvolk on certain issues. At least until February 1933, they held several joint actions,

The defeat of the peasant uprising in 1928 came as a complete surprise to both Munich and Berlin National Socialists. At that time, there were heated discussions between Munich and the left wing of the NSDAP about the role of the peasantry in the coming Third Reich, about private ownership of land. But they did not have the strength and support to launch active propaganda on the ground. The autumn demonstrations of 1928 began just at the moment when the Weimar Republic seemed to have stabilized and emerged from the crisis. The NSDAP took this as a sign of the impending collapse.

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system: after all, until recently, the peasants were completely alien to revolutionary propaganda. In January 1929, the left wing of the NSDAP was in a more advantageous position. Gauleiter Lohse, who was devoted to Hitler, could not prevent the National Socialists of the left from voicing their ideas through the Schleswig-Holstein newspaper, which was published by Bodo Uze.

Bodo Uze, unlike many extremists, was not a front-line soldier. He was born in 1904, and when the German Empire collapsed, he was only 14 years old. But since childhood, he was attracted to nationalism and revolutionary ideas - this is precisely what can explain that he joined the Oberland while still a teenager. He joined the National Socialists in 1928. Even then, he expressed thoughts similar to the ideas of the Strasser brothers. Uze made every effort to create a political alliance that would include revolutionary National Socialists, Landvolk activists, representatives of radical organizations and völkisch groups. This broad coalition was to cause the collapse of the bourgeois order. While Gauleiter Lohse, following an order from Munich, began to fight the "Landvolk", Uze, on the contrary, maintained close ties with Bruno von Salomon, the publisher of the journal "Blood and Soil" Kenstler, Ernst Junger and Ernst Nikisch.

In June 1929, Bodo Uze and Otto Strasser met with Bruno von Salomon and other peasant leaders to discuss the prospects for possible cooperation. In particular, it was about the interaction of their newspapers, which would eliminate not only unnecessary competition,

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but also excessive financial costs. But Dose made every effort to prevent the Munich leadership from folding this pact. However, the left wing, despite the intrigues of the Nazis, managed to maintain friendly relations with Heim and Hamkens.

The first open conflict with Lohse occurred in the autumn of 1929, when a close friend of Otto Strasser, the veterinarian Grantz, quarreled with the Gauleiter of Schleswig-Holstein over the participation of the National Socialists in the actions of the Landvolk. In the course of this discussion, Strasser, Uze, von Salomon, Grantz and their friends worked out the basic principles of the revolutionary peasant program. It was finalized in December 1929, and a month later it was already distributed among the local NSDAP groups. This program was a kind of compilation of the "14 Theses of the German Revolution" and the demands put forward by the "Landvolk". This was another proof that by 1930 the left wing of the NSDAP had finally departed from the Munich leadership on the ideological level. In the introduction to the peasant program, the NSDAP, which still included Otto Strasser, was characterized as a nationalist organization whose goal was a free German nation. Moreover, the NSDAP was a socialist party that advocated the liberation of the working masses of Germany from all forms of oppression and exploitation. And absolutely unacceptable "liberty": the NSDAP was called a workers' party, which recognized the class struggle (!!!) of the working people against the parasitism of all nations and confessions.

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Pidreus Vabilchenno The program itself assumed the unification of all Germans on the basis of self-determination of the people in the Greater German Reich and the equality of the German people with other nations. After coming to power, the NSDAP had to cancel all agreements, obligations, debts signed by the Weimar government with the capitalist countries. "People's comrades" in the new society could only be owners of German blood. Such a right was denied to Jews, Slavs and any foreigners. The general leadership of the state was to be German, just as all the leading representatives of various spheres of public life were to be Germans. "Corrupt parliamentarism" had to be destroyed. After the destruction of the apparatus of all parties, self-government of the working people was to be built on the basis of enterprises. The new organizational form, the "People's Soviet State," was to be based on a hierarchical system of indirect elections. The tasks of the state were to protect the vital needs and work of its citizens, and, if necessary, to expel foreigners from the country. In fact, every non-German who settled in Germany after August 1, 1914, had to be deported from

"Socialist Reich". The program gave all German citizens equal rights and obligations to work for the common good. The achievement of economic liberation was possible only by eliminating the income that comes without labor, the destruction of debt bondage and the transfer to the nation of all the economic resources of the country. The solution of the agrarian question was seen in

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the rationalization of all large and medium (!) farms, the colonization of sparsely populated lands in the east and the protection of small peasant farms, which were supposed to be the basis of imperial land ownership. National interests were guarded most zealously. Their violation was punishable by death, which automatically had to be applied to all usurers and speculators, regardless of their nationality and religion. The trials themselves were supposed to take place under the conditions of applying "German law", which would replace the Roman one, which actually predetermined the creation of the capitalist world order. Public education assumed free education in all types of schools. Free medical care was also planned. In order to irrevocably make Germany a socialist state, the people's army had to take the place of a professional one. The new state even recognized freedom of religion, but on condition that it did not threaten the "People's Soviet Republic" and did not offend the traditions and feelings of the "northern race". The main goal of the moral recovery of the people was to be the return of the old German law, which gave preference to the public good, rather than personal benefits.

These "Proposals for the Revision of the Program of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany" ended with a double call: against capital, the "League of Nations" and America, on the one hand, and on the other hand, with a call for support of the revolutionary movement in other countries. The foreign policy of the "new liberated Germany" was to be described

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seek a military-political alliance with Soviet Russia, oriented against the Western imperialist powers. This program seemed to have a strong influence on the political climate in Schleswig-Holstein. It was she who brought together the revolutionary National Socialists and National Revolutionaries in 1929-1930. But, apparently, Otto Strasser had nothing to do with this text. This is confirmed by a completely different vocabulary, non-Strasserian arguments and non-Strasserian vocabulary. Most likely, this text was written by Bodo Uza. This confirms his very characteristic mixture of radical socialist views, racial intolerance and a penchant for terrorism.

Bodo Uze and Bruno von Salomon, who at that time were inseparable friends, were adherents of the most extreme measures in the field of economics, in fact, representing the main ideas of the National Socialist Left. Along with statements characteristic of the left National Socialists about an alliance with the USSR and the need for a liberation struggle, their texts were distinguished by an exclusively racist content. But Otto Strasser himself was no stranger to anti-Semitism and racism. In this respect, their propaganda was just a variation of Hitler's agitation, differing from it only in their view of foreign policy and the methods of carrying out social measures. The "Völkische" component was an important component of the program of the National Socialist Left. Strasser and his supporters had to adapt their agitation to the rural mentality. Only then could they provide

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some influence on the peasant movement. It is for this reason that the theses of revolutionary National Socialism turned out to be associated with racist ideas, which were not held by only the numerous members of the Landvolk, but even the moderate supporters of Hamkens. It should not be forgotten that Landvolk was supported by such groups as Tannenberg and Werwolf,

for whom anti-Semitism was a matter of course. The racist ideas of Landvolk were developed by Kenstler in his own journal, Blood and Soil. So the anti-Semitic statements of the left National Socialists were dictated by the need to adapt to the way of thinking of the peasant radicals. Hoping to win August Georg Kenstler over to his side, Strasser published three articles in the National Socialist Letters between March and July 1930 that had nothing to do with the radical socialist views of the members of his group.

Strasser stated that with these publications he wanted to "build bridges between the peasants and the workers." Kenstler, he said, was a true representative of the "Landvolk", and therefore his work could contribute to mutual understanding between these two social groups, whose union was to be the key to the success of the National Revolution.

In May 1930, Bodo Uze was simultaneously negotiating with Graf Reventlow, Karl Petel, Ernst Nikisch, Ernst Junger and the two Strasser brothers. During these conversations, a new peasant program was prepared. It was also decided to create a Revolutionary Front, which would be joined by the national revolutionaries, the left national

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national socialists and peasant groups. On June 3, 1930, Dr. Grantz left the NSDAP along with his supporters. In Albersdorf, he and a few dozen other people set up a "Workers' Community" whose goal is to correct the National Socialist movement. Grantz's call put an end to Ouse's hopes of creating a broad revolutionary front. But this step allowed Strasser to gain a foothold in Schleswig-Holstein, over time, about 800 people joined his organization here, mostly supporters of Grantz. When the split in the NSDAP, caused by Otto Strasser, broke out, the leadership of the Hitlerite party immediately realized what a danger the opposition elements that undermined the unity represented. On July 11, after a Strasser peasant demonstration in Schleswig-Holstein, Buchrucker and Grantz were bombed by unknown persons. Several people were injured in the explosion.

In July 1930, in Schleswig-Holstein, the Nazis thwarted all of Strasser's activities aimed at the peasantry. Things got to the point that during a visit to Albersdorf on September 13, 1930, Strasser was forced to take on numerous guards. But this time the event turned out to be disrupted, the intimidated local residents were simply afraid to come to it. There were far more speakers at the rally than listeners.

On July 16, 1930, Bodo Ouse was expelled from the NSDAP. The local National Socialist press again found itself under the control of the Munich leadership. It immediately began a slanderous campaign against the "Bolsheviks from Landvolk". At the same time

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Humkens chose to distance himself from. Strasser's group, however, this did not prevent him from sending his representatives in October of the same year to an expanded meeting of the board of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". In the summer of 1930, the Strasserians managed to create their own groups only in large Schleswig-Holstein cities: Lübeck, Kiel, Hamburg. They were joined by several peasant groups led by Grantz. Despite some success that awaited Strasser at the beginning of the split, the year 1930 ended for him in Schleswig-Holstein with a complete disaster.

After the influence of the Strasserians in the countryside was finally undermined in July 1931, their leader made an attempt to change his agitation among the peasantry and focus on other things. The arrest of Klaus Heim and his lengthy trial were used by almost all national revolutionary organizations. Strasser did not stand aside, he also tried in every possible way to present Heim as a symbolic figure, a defender of

all the offended, the oppressed and the destitute. It was from such people that almost the entire peasant population of Germany consisted. Encouraged by the first successes in August 1930, Strasser actually handed over the leadership of the National Socialist Letters to those people who, in his opinion, could successfully introduce the ideology of revolutionary National Socialism into the peasant environment. These were Bodo Uze, Bruno von Salomon, Christian Klee. In his article "The Peasant Strike", Bruno von Salomon proclaimed Klaus Heim the epitome of

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the very spirit of the peasantry. "If by politics we mean superficial concepts, then we can agree with the attitude that the Land Volk is neither an organization nor a party, that the peasantry in itself is apolitical. But this is if we mean by politics the negotiations and machinations dictated by the mercantile spirit. Those who chose the bomb as a means of political struggle are by no means confused idealists or fanatics. They simply assumed that the stones of the overlooked administrative buildings were not a political attraction. But they knew that in such a primitive way they could express their attitude towards the future of the country. Attitude, clearly and unambiguously stated 6 addresses the spirit of the parties. Not all of Germany is broken yet! "Landvolk" is the spirit of the peasantry, which speaks through the mouths of people like Klaus Heim."

In 1930-1931, Bruno von Salomon, like Otto Strasser, was sure that government repressions would only strengthen the resolve of the Landvolk members and they would fight even more fiercely against the universal enemy - the state, the system.

"The members of the Landvolk are increasingly coming to the realization that the entire administrative elite of the state was nothing more than hostile representatives of the world capitalist system." In the same issue of the National Socialist Letters, Bodo Uze examined in detail the actions of the state against Klaus Heim in the famous "trial of the bombers". He depicted the attempts of justice to give this case a criminal, and not political

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calic character, as well as futile efforts to avoid public outcry. Uze stressed that Heim had resolutely refused to be first on the NSDAP's Schleswig-Holstein list in the Reichstag elections. The author saw in this a logical step of a person who hated the system with all his heart. Uze enthusiastically turned Heim into a revolutionary martyr who was destined to become not just a symbolic figure, but the leader of the entire German revolutionary movement. "The actions of the peasant Chaim went further. The system failed to silence him. On the contrary, he said a hard and adamant "no" to the failure, sacrificing himself and losing his freedom. The NSDAP asked him to head the local electoral list. But a prison is better than a corrupt Reichstag. He who longs to be free must not fall into the 6 network of the system - he must fight. This edition of the National Socialist Letters was entirely devoted to the struggle of the peasants for their rights.

Growing unemployment in the cities and the unabated discontent of broad peasant circles led national revolutionary intellectuals to the conviction that the democratic state was on the verge of collapse. The civil war was supposed to cause the long-awaited social apocalypse in the country: "National Germany should in fact be revolutionary. Fight to the bitter end. But now other means of struggle are required than those that have already been used. While the power is not in our 6 hands. In order to achieve it, we must use the means to which all revolutionary movements resort. For von Salomon, open

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who ruled the electoral system, it was about bringing together all the active fighters from various political camps. They were supposed to put the state in a hopeless situation with their sabotage, terror, active and passive resistance. The system must, with all cruelty, fall upon the daredevils, which would provoke a popular revolution.

Christian Klee wrote: "Perhaps we are 6 a few steps away from a civil war, 6 a few steps away from the terrible and difficult events predetermined by fate itself. We must prepare for them, for the moment when they come. The trial of Klaus Heim and his friends was, in the eyes of the National Revolutionaries, proof that the state was ready to resort to the long-awaited tactics of repression. In the words of Bodo Uze, "the judges did not pass judgment at all, they did not follow the laws at all - they carried out an action to protect the existing system. Do not write off peasant debts, they themselves became criminals from

systems."

_ But this sudden interest in Landvolk gave way to complete apathy. Until November 1930 in the Strasserian newspapers, not a single article appeared, not even a small note about the peasant movement, and the names of von Salomon and Bodo Uze disappeared from the pages altogether. Explanations for this could not be found. But most likely this is due to the emergence of the program of the KKE "national and social liberation of the German people". In addition, many national revolutionaries did not believe in Strasser's organizational abilities and the sincerity of his revolutionary

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luscious beliefs. The Strasserians themselves turned out to be unable to build sufficiently active propaganda structures on the ground. Another reason for breaking off relations was the exorbitant ambitions of Otto Strasser, who wanted to personally lead the entire revolutionary front. Already at the beginning of 1931, both von Salomon and Bodo Uze were convinced that only the communists were able to carry out the German revolution, whose activity and strength should have been the main guarantee of success. At the same time, after the September crisis, the revolutionary National Socialists began to say that the Communists were the main threat to Germany.

The break with the radical peasant elements and the left oppositionists forced Strasser to change his position sharply - he began rapprochement with the moderate groups of Hamkens. At that time they still believed in the possibility of "social mutual aid". In January 1931, the "German Revolution" began to print a special peasant supplement, which was called "Shoe". This name was supposed to connect the newspaper with the secret peasant unions of the late 10th - early 17th centuries, the uprisings of 1493, 1502, 1513, 1517. The motto of "Shoe" was simple: "One right! One Reich! One God! One freedom! The first issue called on all peasants to join the ranks of the German Revolution: "German peasants! The New Year of Troubles has arrived! The road to Golgotha has been going on for several years, but the peasants have not yet come to the conclusion that they need to look for new means in order to improve agriculture and revive village culture."

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Strasser vehemently criticized the government's actions and attacked the behind-the-scenes mercantile policy of the traditional peasant unions. As a result, he came to the conclusion that no one else represented the interests of the German peasantry, and therefore it could rely only on itself. Strasser urged the peasants to leave their unions, "who, because of the bourgeoisie and bureaucracy, have lost all ties with the countryside and people's life." There was no doubt only one alternative: to join the ranks of the revolutionary National Socialists. The Shoe was supposed to infuse them into the Front of the German Revolution, where the peasants would fight under the slogans of "Freedom, Law and the Reich" without making any personal or economic concessions.

The appeal ended with the advice: "German peasants! Learn to defend yourself! Long live the German peasant revolution, which will be carried out by us!"

The above excerpts from the articles are very typical of Strasser's views on the role assigned to the German peasantry in the cause of the revolution. If in 1928 the Strasserians were not prepared to acknowledge peasant unrest, they now claimed that the Landvolk had succeeded in resisting the system not only in Schleswig-Holstein, but also in East Prussia and Silesia. However, in 1931, Strasser presented himself to the public as the only bearer of the truth, the indisputable leader of the movement, with which, by the way, he had almost nothing to do. This misunderstanding becomes even more obvious if we compare the real influence of the "Combat Commonwealth" among the peasantry and these grandiloquent statements, accompanied by

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given by self-satisfied appeals and swaggering advice.

In general, two articles published in Bashmak are noteworthy, where they considered the prospects for further struggle and announced actions that were supposed to win over the peasantry to the side of revolutionary National Socialism. One of the authors, Hippler, considered the collapse of all political parties to be an undeniable fact. In his opinion, the country was already inflamed with a revolution, but it was a question of a spiritual revolution. The pseudonym of the author, Wen del Hippler, was borrowed from the history of the peasant war of 1525. The historical character of this era was born in 1465, was the secretary of Count Henlohe, and later led the rebellious peasants in Neckar. Unfortunately, it is now virtually impossible to establish who was hiding behind this pseudonym. But the fact remains that the revolutionary National Socialists called for a revolution that was supposed to complete the peasant emancipation that had begun back in 1524-1525! Despite centuries of attempts to destroy the peasant soul, the stubborn peasant rose again and again to restore the harmony of the public will. The events of the last 150 years: the unification of Germany, the Kaiser's Reich, the world war, the revolution, the emergence of the Weimar Republic - once again brought the peasantry to the forefront of the struggle for social justice. The Shoe, although it was published for Northern Germany, gradually began to penetrate into the southern regions of the country.

The very methods of agitation and persuasion of the peasantry were limited to a few personal meetings, which

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which were supposed to help attract new people and "beat them with the sacrificial pain" inherent in the revolutionary National Socialists. The "secrecy" of these meetings indirectly indicated how small were the prospects for a "Combat Commonwealth" among the peasantry. Strasser simply did not have enough people to organize massive propaganda, and therefore limited himself to "underground" contacts. Now, in The German Revolution, references to the victims and martyrs of the idea began to appear more often. The fact is that the Nazi SA began to constantly attack meetings of the Strasserians.

Considering how difficult it was for the rank-and-file members of the Combat Commonwealth, Strasser gave the naive advice to report to the German Revolution all established contacts with the leaders of the revolutionary peasantry. In many ways, he parasitized on the name of Klaus Heim. Praising him as a symbol of sacrifice and coming upheavals, the leader of the KGRNS himself abandoned terrorist tactics and acts of violence, in fact supporting the political line of Hamkens. He explained the rejection of terrorism by a number of tactical and ideological reasons. From a tactical point of view, Strasser must have understood that, despite all the statements and shocks

fists, he had no influence on the ground, and his supporters were not at all "non-commissioned officers of the German Revolution", as stated in the official documents of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". From an ideological point of view Strasser saw no need for terrorism. rism and the systematic creation of a revolutionary art

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missions according to the Leninist model. He believed that the "Jacobin" National Socialist revolution was inevitable in itself, and therefore it was necessary to simply wait until the peasantry took a radical position and started the revolution. In this, the views of Hamkens and Strasser coincided. Strasser believed in a gigantic breakthrough of popular feelings, believing that then direct action should have become a political school. Humkens, rejecting violence, believed that the revolution would happen through the spread of modern ideas and social mutual assistance. In the context of the widespread difficulties of a divided society, individuals must sooner or later rally into groups in order to preach the ideas of universal love, which should be based on racial and national values. Folk idealism should be reflected in all aspects, all actions of a person, pouring out at a certain moment in helping relatives. Such a development of society could take place only in the villages, but not in the cities corrupted by individualism. According to Nikisch, Bruno von Salomon, in his novel The City, called Hamkens the German Gandhi.

The village commissions created by Hamkens, over which the Munich leadership of the NSDAP immediately wanted to gain control, were, according to Strasser, to form a "specific front", acting simultaneously with the soldiers' and workers' representatives.

In January 1931, Humkens and Strasser divided their spheres of activity among themselves, but in fact they parted ways. Hamkens was only interested in his personal fame and popularity. Strasser asked

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to provide him with the Landvolk Newspaper as a tribune for speeches. For his part, Strasser promised that he would develop a new people's ideology, which would involve a special economic model - the peasant state. The decision of Hamkens and Strasser was simple: they decided to inform their supporters about the activities being carried out. One hoped to break through the information boycott around the peasant unrest, while the other wanted to become involved in the peasant myth, to help one of the legendary leaders of the Land Volk.

In principle, both kept their promises. Strasser received several official meetings of revolutionary National Socialist peasants, all present, of course, were members of the Landvolk. Strasser's long speech, in which he analyzed the causes of the agricultural crisis and outlined the prospects for the economic reorganization of the country, traditionally became the central point of these events. These theses were supposed to become a "crossing bridge" between the revolutionary National Socialists and representatives of various peasant organizations. The report was immediately printed as a separate pamphlet and distributed at peasant demonstrations and rallies. The program presented short summaries of various articles on the subject that had already been printed. The most striking item of the document was "Agrarian Economics and Life Ideas".

Prohibition of the "Black Banner" published by Hartmund Plaas and Ehrhardt with the participation of members of the groups

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Humkens and Strasser, gave the leadership of the Strasserians a convenient excuse to use their newspapers to present the positions of the Landvolk. The March issue of "Shoe" was dedicated to

presentation of specific economic topics, without paying any attention to events on places.

In April 1931, the articles in The German Revolution changed their tone to cover other topics. The place of economic programs and calls for a German revolution was taken by attacks on the agrarian policy of the NSDAP and the KPD. The latest issue of Bashmak, which was published, generally attacked the traditional peasant unions that were trying to resolve the agrarian issue through negotiations.

Strasser's critique of the NSDAP centered around the Nazis' demand to restore the inviolability of private property. It is not surprising that this seemed to him significant. Strasser's attacks on the NSDAP were always combined with criticism of the KPD; he was not satisfied with the polarization of the peasantry. At that moment, the "Combat Commonwealth" was just uniting with the revolutionary stormtroopers of Stennes, who always adhered to anti-communist views.

Strasser hoped very much that he would be able to win over the majority of the Landvolk members to his side. But he was unlucky: on May 15, 1931, the KPD issued the "Programme for Assistance to the German Peasantry", and intellectuals popular among the peasantry went over to the side of the communists (Uze, von Salomon, etc.).

From the end of May 1931, criticism of the program of the KPD in the "German Revolution" became systematic. In that

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In the program document, or rather, in the very fact of its appearance, Strasser saw tacit confirmation that "the current agitation of the peasants was unsuccessful." The Communists, in his opinion, resorted to another tactical ploy, a political trick. As long as the Communists did not separate the peasant program from the Communist Manifesto, they, like all the forces that tried to solve the problems of the countryside only in words, remained for Strasser the enemies of the German peasantry. Meanwhile, the recognition of the right of ownership of the land by the KKE was for the leader of the "Combat Commonwealth" the first sign of the convergence of their assessments of the current situation. This was a kind of continuation of the program of national and social liberation of the German people, where the communists for the first time recognized the concept of "nation" and touched upon the national question.

Despite sharp criticism of the communists, Strasser was nevertheless ready to acknowledge the transformation of the KPD into a national communist party. But this transformation was doomed to failure, since the communists "blew revolutionary militancy" into the consciousness of the workers and peasants, who were supposed to follow the revolutionary National Socialists. This criticism was continued in the June issue of Black Flag, where the purely party preconditions for the appearance of the peasant program of the KKE were analyzed. "The situation in Germany simply forced the communists to take the first step, to actually abandon the Marxist ideology and move closer to conservative-nationalist ideas." Each attack on peasant property was considered by Strasser as a betrayal of the very

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kind of German peasantry. When attacks were made on large landownership, this was just another proof of the liberal origins of the KKE, since the communists tried to solve fundamental spiritual problems in a purely economic way.

Such a harsh reaction was the result of the impotence of Strasser and Hamkens, who were losing their influence on the peasant masses. One of the reasons for the crisis of the "Combat Commonwealth", which occurred in the summer of 1931 and was characterized by a massive exodus of members from the combat groups of Hamburg and Kiel, was precisely the peasant propaganda, divorced from reality. By August

1931 and Hamkens himself lost all supporters and followers in Schleswig-Holstein. Only a few people who lived in Alberdorf could follow him. At this time, he even stopped publishing the Landvolk Newspaper. Due to financial problems, Hamkens decided on an open conflict with her editors - an unforgivable step for a politician. |

In October 1931, after the collapse of numerous banks and another fall in agricultural prices, it seemed that Humkens could restore his former authority. The idea of a warning strike, actively promoted by the Landvolk leaders, received a wide response. In many villages, "Public assistance. But in fact, willingly or not, Hamkens helped the Nazis. He was unable to form a national movement. In the same places where his ideas received support, he preferred to limit himself to defending exclusively corporate interests and

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the proclamation of demagogic slogans about the necessary alliance with the proletariat. The Nazis were more successful in agitation than Hamkens and Strasser. The NSDAP emphasized, first of all, the inviolability of the property of the peasants, which aroused great confidence among the villagers, who primarily care about their own welfare. What could Strasser do? Although he was not a peasant revolutionary, he decided to propagate a special doctrine aimed at the peasants.

Otto Strasser outlined the program of socialization of the economy in detail in his pamphlet The Building of German Socialism. The main principles of the socialist economy were total autarky, state monopoly on foreign trade and planned economy. In the conditions of revolutionary upheavals in Schleswig-Holstein and the growth of extremist sentiments among the peasantry, the solution of the agrarian issue and the need for national socialist control over the means of production became the most important theoretical topics for the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" .

According to Strasser, the revival of the German economy was possible only if private ownership of land, minerals and means of production was abolished. Strasser's socialization of the economy was fundamentally different from the Marxist model. It was defined as an attempt to derive economic theory from the very nature of the German. Strasser suggested that the country's economic system should be determined not by dry economic theory, but by the living soul of the German

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his personality, which manifests itself primarily in independence, responsibility and the joy of creativity. , foodistic form of management, which assumed the release of Kalichny egoism, destroys the state-public principle of existence. But the three components of the German soul brought to life will return to people the joy of creation and love for the fatherland, which many oppressed workers confused with the state, the bureaucratic system. According to Strasser, responsibility, independence and creative activity are possible only under a social system that will eliminate the inequality of the Germans and carry out the deproletarianization of Germany, which was simply necessary, since Marxism created a class from the workers that threatens the existence of the people's community. In general, Strasser's understanding of the proletariat was very different from the Marxist one. The revolutionary National Socialists did not attach economic importance to it, nor did they use such concepts as labor power and production relations. Strasser meant by the proletariat those who were united by extreme need and suffering.

The campaign to defend the German countryside had to be accompanied by a "revolution of the soul" that rejected faith in progress and was based on the principles of race, blood and soil. It was them that Strasser made the basis of his peasant ideology.

Deproletarianization must be linked to the possibility of access for every German to property. But this was only possible under two legal conditions: all Germans had to be collective owners of the land and had the right to

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possession of all means of production. The popular community was to distribute this property in the form of hereditary fiefs in accordance with the ability of each German to cultivate the land and productive labor. The very terminology used by Strasser sent us back to the era of feudalism. The state, the organized form of the nation, must develop the idea that all rights to the land belong to the people's community, while the peasant families, the owners of fiefs, act only as land users.

The introduction of the practice of hereditary fiefs as a harmful part of the new economic order, as well as the modification of the right to property, were important components of the process of popular cultural revolution, which was supposed to end with the establishment of German law and the creation of new socio-cultural ties.

From the study of world history, Strasser derived several fundamental laws that were to determine the vital rhythms of the German people. He came to the conclusion that the urban population was the engine of liberal revolutions, while the peasant demolition would play a decisive role in building a new social order.

The uprising in Schleswig-Holstein, the terrorist acts of the Landvolk and the radicalization of the peasantry caused by the agitation of the Communists and Nazis were clear evidence of the peasants' rejection of the Weimar Republic. Since it was the peasantry that was to become the basis of the future state, the process of state building would inevitably lead to a reduction in the proletariat, and children

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peasants would return to the land. This campaign will be limited at first, as Germany must prepare for a new war. That is why the National Socialist revolutionary government is simply obliged to maintain the industrial potential in order to successfully mobilize and create a strong military economy. After defeating the Western powers, the German army should contribute to the structural reorganization and psychological restructuring of German society, the demobilized soldiers will become the driving force behind agrarian reform. The gigantic industrial complex must be dismembered and scattered across the country in small pockets.

Abandoned or insufficiently developed lands were subject to immediate confiscation. The prerequisites for the technical implementation of internal colonization were not original: the reconquest of land from the sea, the plowing of new land, the cultivation of neglected land. The planned defense of the land economy was supposed to return to rural life not only the peasant children who had left for the city, but also a significant part of the workers employed in industrial production. The emergence of new enterprises in the countryside had to be complex; but first of all, peasants who once left the village should work at rural enterprises. They could simultaneously engage in agricultural activities on land allocated to them by the state as

hereditary fief. According to Strasser, sooner or later the "new peasants" will have an owner mentality, which will lead to the simultaneous disappearance of the proletariat

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sky consciousness. But the state had to treat the traditional peasantry, which existed even before the German Revolution, in a completely special way. Possible dissatisfaction was automatically eliminated by a broad program of social and economic measures.

In 1925, Strasser set the maximum land allotment at 1,000 morgues! (255 ha). The allotment could be leased or passed down through the male line as a hereditary fief. Land holdings in 3,000 morgues (765 hectares) were supposed to be divided into plots of several tens of hectares in size. Laborers of large landowners also had to receive their own land allotment, which amounted to half a hectare. Such discrimination against farm laborers was probably due to Strasser's belief that they were all Marxists or sympathetic to the Communists. The leader of the revolutionary National Socialists relied on the more prosperous peasantry, which traditionally adhered to anti-Marxist positions. The farm laborer's allotment looked more like a home garden than a plot of land from which one could feed oneself. Approximately such allotments should have been received by workers of agricultural enterprises. But for them, working the land was not the only way to earn a living.

From the lands belonging to the state, ideal peasant households were to be created, which were actually under the guidance of qualified certified managers, who

1 Here Strasser used the old Prussian morgue unit of 25,532 acres.

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who were appointed by the government. Depending on the size of the land allotment (len), the peasant council appointed a share of the deduction of production. As a rule, the product had to be divided into two parts. The sale of one covered the costs of food, clothing, housing, and capital goods. The second, which accounted for 10% of the output, was deducted in favor of the people's community. All produced products could be sold, and any surplus was not subject to any taxes. In the event of the death of the owner of the land, it was not divided among the children, but was transferred to the heir, who was chosen by the local peasant council.

The Peasants' Council monitored the output and set the amount of deductions. In case of poor cultivation of the land, the council could take away the hereditary flax, so that such cases would not happen again in the future. The allocation of already cultivated land was also carried out by the peasant council. The main criteria for granting a family a plot of land were its position, abilities and diligence. The basic principle is not to give more land than a particular family could handle. At the same time, if the allotment was small, the family could only earn a living.

The implementation of the revolutionary National Socialist agrarian reform was possible only if capitalist exploitation was abolished and large landholdings were divided up. By the abolition of capitalist coercion, Strasser meant the liquidation of chronic debts among the German peasantry. When all

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the lands will be turned into hereditary fiefs, the peasantry will be freed from debts, and new enslavement will be impossible. In addition, anyone who had illegal profits, that is, without working, could receive a profit from their loans and interest on them, risked losing land allotment.

In 1931, the Strasser program was supplemented by another clause, according to which the peasants could increase their productivity thanks to investments provided by the agricultural chambers. In addition, hereditary fiefs could neither be sold nor given to other persons.

Strasser was convinced that large agricultural enterprises, modeled on the Soviet state farms, were doomed to failure, since the peasants in them would not have been motivated to work. The Strasserian peasant state was built on banal tillage. In general, this example was borrowed from the experience of the agrarian reform carried out in Denmark.

In October 1931, the creation of the Black Front was loudly announced, but in fact it was a purely propaganda move. If Hamkens still had some supporters in Schleswig-Holstein and Silesia, then the revolutionary National Socialists did not receive any support among the peasantry. When new people joined the Black Front in August 1932, Landvolk created three groups of them. But the optimism proved premature. By 1933, it became clear that the peasantry everywhere followed the NSDAP. At first, Hamkens, along with Ni

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Nazis. But when in February 1933 the "Black Front" was banned by the Nazi regime, he tried to distance himself from the former allies. Formally, Hamkens met with them several more times, but when stormtroopers burst into his house on May 30, he preferred to announce that he was leaving politics. In July 1933, the remnants of the Landvolk were unified by the office of Walter Darre, the Imperial leader of the peasants in Nazi Germany. Any political opposition was brutally suppressed.

The alliance between Strasser and Hamkens was destroyed. However, Klaus Heim's attempts to prevent the peasantry from joining the NSDAP also ended in failure. The alliance between peasants, soldiers and workers called for by the Black Front existed only on paper. Strasser's activities could never seriously interfere with the development of the NSDAP and its agitation in Schleswig-Holstein. The Strasserians only weakened the Weimar Republic, pushing a wide part of the villagers to the perception of the totalitarian Hitlerite ideology. The events in Schleswig-Holstein are an excellent illustration of the political absurdity of Otto Strasser, which ultimately led to his political collapse. He seriously tried to combine his theoretical radicalism with reformist practice, and he was only the initiator of small actions that were used by those against whom Strasser himself fought - the communists and the Nazis.

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Chapter 4

ACTION CIRCLE BETWEEN THE BLACK FRONT AND CHANCELER SCHLEICHER

The Tat (Action) magazine gained phenomenal popularity among German intellectuals. It was in it that all the main political publications during the time of the Weimar Republic were printed. The editorial staff of the journal itself believed that "it was the only publication that, with an inexorable desire for truth, got to the heart of the issues of today's political and spiritual life." As one researcher aptly noted: "The magazine had its finger on the pulse of

stories". "Action" was created by the Horneffer brothers and, in fact, until October 1929 did not play any role in the spiritual life of Germany. Under the leadership of the publisher Eugen Diederik, the magazine gradually turned into an "anti-liberal, anti-humanist, anti-civilist and anti-Western publication". He advocated a specific German people's state, for the idea of a people's community. Its new editors were eager to see democratic ideas complemented by an aristocratic attitude. But at the same time, the magazine opposed racist prejudice, representing an attempt at a philosophical search for a new spirituality. "Action" wanted to create a myth that would possibly lead to a revolution in the system of social values, thereby preparing the onset of a new era. So, in October 1929, Action published a program prepared by

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Hans Zehrer, who set the new course for the magazine.

At that time, Hans Zehrer was a member of the editorial board of the Fossischen Zeitung and belonged to a group of conservative intellectuals. In addition to Ceres himself, the group included Ferdinand Fried, Ernst Wilhelm Eschmann, Gisler Wirzing.

Ferdinand Fried is the pseudonym of Friedrich Zimmermann, who was born on August 14, 1898 in Friedenwalde an der Oder. He was the economic editor of the Fossischen Zeitung. Between 1923 and 1933 he was editor of the Berliner Morgenpost (Berlin Morning Post). Since 1929, he has been a contributor to the Action magazine. After the Nazis came to power, Fried was a journalist for the Berlin Gazette. In 1934 he joined the SS and worked in the SS headquarters for race and settlements. After the war, he was the editor of Sonntagsblatt, and in 1953 he headed the magazine Welt. Died in 1967.

Ernst Wilhelm Ashmann is the pseudonym of Leopold Dingre. Born in 1904 in Berlin, he defended his dissertation with Alfred Weber in Heidelberg, and for seven years was an assistant professor at the Higher School of Politics in Berlin. In 1944 Ashman became head of the German Institute in Marseilles, and in 1960 he became professor of sociology at the University of Münster.

By and large, the circle "Action" was not an established organization. Initially, it was the editorial board of the magazine of the same name, which later began to adjoin the clubs of readers "Actions" spontaneously arising in various cities. Thanks to the journalistic talent of Hans Zehrer, in two years the circulation of the magazine was raised from 800 to

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30 thousand copies. Hans Zehrer himself had much in common with Otto Strasser. Just like Strasser, he volunteered for the front at the age of 16. Like many young people, he contrasted his front-line experience with the bourgeois worldview. Like many Germans, he suffered a lot, lived in extreme need. After returning from the front, he taught medicine and psychology, then history, sociology and national economics. His teacher was the world famous Werner Sombart. Due to financial problems, Ceres was unable to complete the training. Nevertheless, he combined his work at the Fossischen Zeitung with private historical and sociological research.

Hans Zehrer was deeply impressed by Oswald Spengler. But Ceres was admired by no means by his work "The Decline of Europe", but by another work – "Prussianism and Socialism". Ceres also showed genuine interest in Karl Mannheim, Wilhelm Pareto, Georges Sorel. He supported the theories of Carl Schmidt, who came to the conclusion that the time of parliamentarism is passing and the time of authoritarian states is coming. In Action, G. Zehrer developed views that were influenced by such political theories. Each member of Action had his own clear specification: Fried was engaged in political economy, setting out his own vision of the problem in the works The End of Capitalism and Autarky; Ashman

was responsible for systematization and analysis of planned economy programs; Grünberg "brought the reader closer to the picture of the new state" and developed a national pedagogical concept. The main idea of the magazine was

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the belief that links between right and left actually bypass the stage of democratic republicanism. With the national break of the existing society, right and left positions had to be fused into something common, a new unified position.

Ceres predicted to his readers the chaos that had to be experienced, since this was the only way to clean up Germany. In October 1929, when the world economic crisis had already hit Germany, Ceres spoke of it as a grace-filled deliverance. In the crucible of economic chaos, a new German state was to emerge with a new economic and social order in which the national and social poles would meet. Supported by Fried, who predicted the death of capitalism, Zehrer argued that the Weimar Republic had no more time left and would face a similar fate. On the eve of the revolution, a creative synthesis was required: "As chaos approaches and old points of view decay more and more, new positions are maturing. But the moment of their action has not yet come. We must wait for the end of the process of decomposition of the old.

This wait-and-see attitude of Action did not prevent Ceres from looking in crisis-ridden Germany for those social groups that could reorient the nation. "Action" divided the entire German society into three interested groups. On one side were capital and the rich. On the other, the masses, who were not a clear political group with their own

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mi economic interests. The masses consisted of the working class, its organizations, employees, small and medium artisans. But there was also a third group, a certain reserve of discontent, or, as Ceres called them, "bacteria", as they penetrated between labor and capital. This social vinaigrette should not just be explosive, but demolish everything in its path. The task of the journalists of "Action" was to foresee the development of the situation and to know the course of events. Zehrer adhered to the Pareto theory of the circulation of elites, and therefore proclaimed that all social movements were initially created by a highly educated minority, a new German elite that had broken out of the middle strata. These intellectuals did not seek political recognition, they were only interested in the destruction of the old world: "We are not talking about those people who shake the air with empty words, calling for the struggle for their own existence. We are talking about those who are ready to completely destroy this very existence. After the chaos and waiting time, the "hour of the new man" was to come: "The moment will come to build a new world with new people and new ideas."

"In our position now, to adhere to some kind of absolute, party dogmatism means to significantly limit the scope of research, since they blind the view of existing phenomena. As the crisis begins to widen and deepen, the doubters will ask: what is the nature of this process? But you can only follow it with your eyes

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it is difficult to maintain a purely contemplative attitude, the view of an outside observer: "We will kill how our ideas, our arguments and our demands will be borrowed and how they will be driven around the political field like a ball. Our banners will be frayed and torn, passing from hands to hands in the form of patches. But the best of us will recoil from pomposity and hide in modest offices to test new formulas, ponder new arguments. The coming turmoil will raise the question: should we take part or stay on the side?"

Ceres foresaw that in the middle strata, located between labor and capital, discontent would steadily grow. It was they, these middle strata, who were to become the stronghold of the future revolution, a fusion of the national and the social, which neither the KKE nor the NSDAP were capable of. "The future path leads to where the right unites with the left; where, having created a new community, people will merge under the banner of the myth of a new nation. This was, in the opinion of the activists of Action, the only way for the people to become a single whole, to be transformed into a new organic order, into a new society. "Today, the order that liberalism is trying to impose on us is stupid slavery, which is presented as freedom. But it is the new system that is able to give answers to the questions: "Why? For what? For what?"

In 1932, Zehrer decided to greatly expand his analysis to include a number of conservative ideas. "Action" resolutely renounced everything

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anything to do with liberalism. For example, the members of the "Action" rejected prudence, giving preference to feelings, since "our time and what it carries in itself can hardly be comprehended by the human mind."

The crisis for Ceres was not just a means to bring about the long-awaited chaos. The crisis was a prelude to the revolution, which will be supported by those who began to change reality in numerous youth movements, who were the bearers of the new spirituality of 1914, who "inherited" front-line experiences. Fried's anti-capitalist arguments, Grünberg's ideas of a national dictatorship, Wirzing's eastern orientation supported Ceres' dream of a new Germany in every possible way. All the Germans of Europe were supposed to be in it. The economy of the new power was supposed to be self-sufficient. Its policy will be determined by the dictatorial elite. The social order of the new Germany will be unshakable.

There was much in common between the views of Strasser and Ceres. Action took a very positive view of the split in the Nazi party in August 1930. But until February 1931, there were no serious contacts between these two leaders. From January to March 1931, the German Revolution published a couple of apologetic articles, in which the "Action" was given the first place among all the political journals that existed in Germany at that time. The revolutionary National Socialists praised the courage of the editors of this magazine, admired the stubborn struggle against capitalism and the reaction

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so Ay in a her, which was led by the editorial board of "Action". Later, The German Revolution mentioned an article that appeared in the journal Ceres. In this publication entitled "The Crisis of National Socialism" the author spoke highly of the Otto Strasser group.

In March 1931, Action reprinted an excerpt from Herbert Blank's book Adolf Hitler-Wilhelm III with a positive review. This indicated that somewhere in February 1931, both groups nevertheless got to know each other better. The friendship between Strasser and Ceres lasted from June 1931 to March 1932. It was far from being formal. This was also confirmed by Ceres' article "Left or Right". On the pages of the "Action" began to periodically appear advertising Strasser's "German Revolution". In October 1931, Zeres took part in the Second Imperial Congress of Revolutionary National Socialists, where he openly supported the creation of the Black Front. The article "Left or Right?" was reprinted by Richard Schapke as proof that the ideas of "Action" and "Black Front" absolutely coincided.

The failures of the "Black Front", the gradual decline of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" gave Ceres an excuse to renounce Strasser's activities. The editor of Action decided to dedicate himself to developing a hypothetical "third way" between communists and Nazis. Throughout April 1932, he pored over theoretical calculations and political formulations. The third path was to be paved by a strong man,

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According to Ceres, he was Chancellor Schleicher!. It was he who, as Deystviya wrote in October 1932, "denied all parties and parliament that were corrupt and incapable of action." The third way was also to reject the one-party fascist experiment. Not only did it inevitably lead to civil war, but it was not romantic enough to suggest a genuine revolution. So, there was only one way left - to carry out the revolution from above. This could be done only by those who already had power, those who were ready for decisive action. These could be the Reichswehr and the Reichs-President Hindenburg.

1 Schleicher Kurt von (1882–1934), last chancellor of the Weimar Republic. Born April 7, 1882 in Brandenburg in an old Prussian Junker family. In 1903 he joined the 3rd Guards Infantry Regiment under the command of General Paul von Hindenburg. In 1913 he was invited with the rank of captain to the General Staff, where he worked during World War I. He was a close friend of the son of Paul von Hindenburg - Oscar. In 1918 von Schleicher became adjutant to chief quartermaster Wilhelm Trainer. He took an active part in the creation of volunteer corps. In February 1926, von Schleicher head of the land forces of the Ministry of the Reichswehr. In 1929, von Schleicher was promoted to the rank of major general. He held various government posts, including being the Minister of Defense. On December 3, 1932, succeeding the retired Franz von Papen, von Schleicher became Chancellor of the Reich. His half-hearted attempts to unite the actions of the trade unions and the Reichswehr in order to stop the Nazis rushing to power came to nothing. As a result of behind-the-scenes political intrigues of the former chancellor von Papen and Hitler, President Hindenburg accepted the resignation of von Schleicher and on January 30, 1933 appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor. Hitler, who did not forget his political opponent, brutally took revenge on von Schleicher during the events of the Night of the Long Knives. On June 30, 1934, several men broke into the retired chancellor's villa, mortally wounded his wife and killed him, as was later reported, while attempting armed resistance.

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Cooperation with Schleicher brought Ceres a monthly support of 15,000 marks and the position of Privy Councilor to the Reich Chancellor. In addition, he received the post of editor-in-chief of one of the largest Berlin newspapers, the Berlin Review, which was financed from the money of the "German nationals" and controlled personally by Schleicher. : Strasser could not approve of such a position of his former ally and from August 1932 began periodically

to make attacks on the "Action". The first criticism was made about Ceres's article "Reform or Revolution". Strasser said that the slogan "Reformation instead of restoration and revolution" was contrary to the spirit of revolutionary National Socialism, which rejects half-measures and half-reforms, paying tribute only to total revolution.

At the same time, an article by Goebbels was published on the problem of reforms. This gave Strasser a good reason to equate "Angrif" and "Action." Not knowing that Ceres had changed his political convictions, he tried to forgive his friend "such an unfortunate wording." But, just in case, he recalled the statement of the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth", which was published on July 3, 1932 in the "Black Banner". In it, the Commonwealth executive committee opposed "the government of Schleicher, Gregor Strasser and Brüning." It also emphasized that the revolutionary National Socialists rejected any moderate tactical considerations. The Strasserians were determined to fight against the conciliatory policy with the government.

But at that time, Strasser was not yet ready for a radical break in relations with Ceres, so
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"For us and for the general public, Deistbie continued to be listed as the 6th Black Front. But Ceres' answer dispelled the last hopes. He broke off relations with the "supreme leader of the Black Front, since on September 4, 1932, he allowed himself unforgivably boorish criticism in the editorial of his newspaper. That ill-fated article said that the Strasserians were watching with anxiety the approach of Ceres to Brüning. They were even more alarmed that the "Action" was turning into a supplier of ideas "to the court of Schleicher." Ceres was reproached that, adhering to reformist slogans, he joined the party of government policy. According to Strasser, Zehrer overestimated the role of the Reichswehr, and the "Action" itself played the role of a "political poet" in the government. The magazine was accused of becoming a defender of the capitalist system. To a certain extent, the accusation is fair - at that time, Ceres did not even think of offending bourgeois laws and private property.

As a result, the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" refused to support the Schleicher government, heading for the fight against his "trade union-militarist cabinet", whose main goal was to expel young forces from all socialist organizations.

In response to a remark by Ferdinand Fried in the Daily Review, Strasser published in the Black Front an excerpt from the pamphlet The Building of German Socialism, in which he contrasted the state-bureaucratic socialism of the Stalinist type with the program of corporate socialism. . To demonstrate to his supporters the absurdity of Schleicher's plans, Strasser

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cited a detailed article by Theodor Leipert, a member of the government and chairman of the All-German Union of German Trade Unions. In it Leipert supported Strasser's economic ideas, namely the idea of limiting private property and introducing certain corporate-state forms. Leipert even agreed to get involved ("as far as possible") in the discussion about the individual economic demands of Otto Strasser. But in response

the leader of the "Black Front" only retorted that the trade unions would not be inspired by Schleicher's plans, and therefore were doomed to failure.

In December 1932, Zehrer began a heated debate with the KPD and the NSDAP. In his article "Forecasts for Germany", he claimed that he saw a growing Bolshevik threat, which was expressed in a significant increase in the number of communist deputies. Ceres was absolutely correct in noting that the state was no longer able to govern the 14 million electors who only wished for its downfall. The danger seemed so great to him that he seriously feared a split in the NSDAP. Under such conditions, the radical part of the National Socialists (the proletariat and the revolutionary SA) could join the communists. Strasser spoke about this: "Communism in its Marxist-Bolshevik form after 1923 has no chance of killing the power." It didn't matter if the KKE or the NSDAP would send 230 deputies to the Reichstag, as it depended on "the clarity of the proposed path and the strength of the leader's pain."

The controversy between Strasser and Ceres reached its peak at the end of December 1933. Then the Black Front came out under the heading: "LIBE

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RALLY MERCENARY. Bourgeois Ceres brandishes the tomahawk of war against the German Revolution. This was an insulting remark to Ceres' article "Revolutionary Sectarians". In it, the Privy Councilor of the Reich Chancellor asked the question: "What do you actually want and what goal are you striving for?" The article was supposed to lead to the conclusion that the Strasserians were not capable of any constructive creative activity. "Their pain is dictated by feelings that have nothing to do with reality, because they do not represent their own capabilities; the will to work, to painstaking, daily activity is replaced by high-flown romantic notions of "empire", "German socialism" and "revolution". According to Ceres, the revolution, as an inevitable historical process, needed time to mature. The riots were just extremely dangerous. As an example, Zehrer cited the same Lenin, who, hiding from the secret police, lived in Switzerland for 12 years.

The break between "Action" and "Commonwealth of Arms" was predetermined by Strasser's theoretical dogmatism (the age-old problem of stillborn "German revolutions") and the various paths of development of conservative circles. But even the political dilettantism of Ceres, which is not as obvious as that of Strasser, led this journalist to a concrete attempt to save the country from the Nazi threat. And although the "Schleicher course" was unrealistic, it was an open sincere step. At the same time, Strasser, blinded by an irrational belief in

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his mission, just watched the development of events. In the end, he had to simply state that power was in the hands of Hitler.

(Now it is difficult to answer the question, was it true that "Action" was in the "Black Front"? If Zehrer was friends with Strasser for some time, then neither Fried nor other employees of the journal ever talked about their alliance with the revolutionary national For his part, Strasser repeatedly repeated that he admired the economic theory of Fried, but this did not stop Otto from forbidding the members of his circle from studying any other economic theories in the "cadre school" of the "Combat Commonwealth" other than his own "Building a German socialism." It would be foolish to deny that Action maintained ties with the Black Front through its leaders, but it should be noted that Ceres's word carried far more weight than Otto Strasser's entire Black Front.

Both of these figures could only temporarily conclude an alliance between themselves. But neither side had sufficient strength to avert a German catastrophe, as Hitler's rise to power would later be called.

authorities. Both Strasser and Zehrer believed that a special fate was destined for them, that it was they who would bring the torch of a new social order to German soil. But the "new order" became a phrase from Hitler's arsenal, the Fuhrer put a completely different meaning into it.

If we try to consider the "Black Front" from the point of view of ideological tactics, without taking into account organizational alliances, then its

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the borders will be too close to make Strasser's dreams come true. The "Combat Commonwealth" as the backbone of the "Black Front" maintained constant contacts only with the "werewolves" and Shtennes' stormtroopers. The former made it possible to establish contact with E. Nikisch's "Resistance" and "Oberland". The revolutionary SA can be attributed to the "Black Front" with a gigantic stretch. Strasser's very extensive connections also allowed him to establish contacts with some representatives of the "Steel Helmet" and the "Young German Order". At the same time, it remains unclear how long they lasted and what character they were. The same can be said about the youth "bündish" organizations. There is not a single mention of its connections with the Black Front in the numerous literature about the "bündish" youth. If Strasser paid attention to it in his newspaper, it did not at all follow that the youth organizations were allies of the revolutionary National Socialists. These reports brought only a few people to the Black Front. The front itself, created by Strasser, was not an organization that posed a serious threat to the Nazi party. It could have been such if Strasser had rallied all the national Bolshevik and national revolutionary organizations together. But this was beyond his power. Strasser preferred to invent a myth about his power. He developed it to incredible proportions during his Canadian emigration. After the war, he did not even consider it necessary to get rid of him. Almost all of Otto Strasser's memoirs are half fiction, the product of ambitious fantasies.

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Chapter 5

"BLACK FRONT" IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

It seemed that after the Second Imperial Congress, the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" had dissolved into the chaos of the Weimar Republic, which preceded Hitler's rise to power. Indeed, the revolutionary National Socialists made a number of blunders and mistakes. A certain number of Strasserians chose to return to the NSDAP, someone decided to link their future with the communists. But such a formulation of the question is largely inaccurate. It does not take into account the resistance of the Otto Strasser group to Hitler's unification that lasted until 1935.

The seventeen months that are passed between the Second Imperial Congress and Prohibition the "Combat Commonwealth" can be divided into two stages. Hildebrand, the organizational head of the KGRNS, called the first of them a time of crises and weaknesses. July 1932 can be considered its border. The consequences of numerous crises turned out to be very significant: most of the combat districts fell apart, many combat groups disappeared altogether, such famous figures as Hans Wendt and Pagel left the "Combat Commonwealth". But after a protracted crisis, the KGRNS was in for an almost triumphant success.

In August 1932, Ernst Grosse published in Munich a rebellious leaflet, Truth of Life, in which he exposed Hitler's alleged asceticism. Almost immediately after the publication of this paper,

created a group

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Grosse's support, which consisted mainly of former members of the NSDAP. Its leader expected to receive support not only in Bavaria, and therefore contacted Otto Strasser almost immediately. Their meeting took place on September 29, 1932. Strasser and Grosse decided to transform the Munich organization into a branch of the "Combat Commonwealth" - "fighting group".

The executive committee of the "Battle Commonwealth" appointed a well-known former Freikorps officer Ajudwig Estreicher in Munich as the chief of the new structure. Grosse himself, having given his newspaper a new name, the German Searchlight, decided to place it at the disposal of Strasser. It was thanks to the propaganda of the "Searchlight" from the NSDAP that many dissatisfied with Hitler's policies were lured out. Himmler himself followed the events with concern. To expel the dissatisfied, he had to personally travel around all the party organizations in Bavaria.

Strasser became so bold that he decided to go to the "brown capital" in order to participate in a dispute with the editor of the communist Novaya Gazeta. But the police, fearing that the dispute would turn into a bloody battle between the communists and the Nazis, banned this event. In addition, it could not be ruled out that the Nazis would attack not only the representatives of the KIT, but also Strasser, who was objectionable to them. And then the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" made another mistake. It unwittingly provoked the departure of Ludwig Estreicher and Ernst Grosse from the organization. They preferred to join one of the many paramilitarist nationalist organizations. The stronghold of the Strasserians in Munich has disappeared.

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A new group in Munich was entrusted with the formation of Friedrich Behr. But he was well aware that the Strasserian structure would not last long in the Nazi lair. As a result, he turned to the leadership with a proposal to start cooperation with the Bavarian communists, who could, at the very least, organize protection. After some deliberation, Strasser approved this plan. In the early days of March 1932, Behr solemnly opened in Augsburg the "stronghold" of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". This event was attended by 35 guests. 20 of them were communists, the rest were members of the Tannenberg alliance. It is noteworthy that the police informant in his report spoke of only three Bavarian Strasserians! The presence at this meeting of the deputy of the Bavarian Landtag, the communist Wagner, allowed the informer to make a hasty conclusion that the "Combat Commonwealth" was a pro-communist group.

After six months of exhausting work, the ranks of the Black Front began to replenish again. More than a thousand people all over Germany joined it. It seemed that Strasser was back on horseback.

The growth in the number of members of the "Combat Commonwealth" again brought to life the problem of creating our own security group, which would be able to successfully resist the growing terror of the Nazi stormtroopers. The Executive Committee of the RGRNC has been nurturing this plan for a long time. In October 1930, the "Armed Revolutionary Fighters" were created, which in June 1931 came under the control of Walter Stennes. On the second

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The Persian Congress further developed this idea. Under the leadership of Hans Wendt, a "combat sabotage group" was created. But after Wendt left the Combat Commonwealth and the sabotage group's ammunition depots exploded, Strasser had to make do with a few personal bodyguards who accompanied him on his travels around the country.

From October 1931 to July 1932, the revolutionary National Socialists carried out their activities under the protection of the communist militant organizations. Over time, the number of attacks by Hitler's stormtroopers decreased. But this was by no means due to increased security measures or a more loyal position of the SA, but to the fact that the "Combat Commonwealth" actually stopped holding public events. But in June 1932, the Gauleiters of the NSDAP were ordered to counteract in every possible way the newly activated revolutionary National Socialists. A wave of attacks and assassination attempts swept across the country again.

On September 4, 1932, Major Buhruker, on behalf of the executive committee of the Combat Commonwealth, called on the most determined members of the organization to join the Black Guard. The obligatory criteria for admission were: discipline, devotion to the idea, indomitable fighting spirit. This organization, which rallied "political soldiers" in its ranks, had to fight until complete victory with the armed fascist groups. The "Black Guard" was supposed to participate not only in self-defense, but also in propaganda campaigns. To extend the basis of this structure, Buchruker turned to

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"to the old stormtroopers who realized the futility of Hitler's policy; to honest red front-line soldiers, who understood the senselessness of fratricidal struggle; to the members of the "Steel Helmet" who did not want the return of the monarchist cowards, the true perpetrators of the disgrace of November 9, 1918; to the comrades of the Imperial Banner who survived the collapse but have not lost their will to fight."

When, in October 1932, Major Buhruker entrusted the "Black Guard" with the implementation of political tasks, he gave this organization a certain historical and mythological aspect. Having looked into the times of the Peasants' War, Buhruker found there the prototype of the "Black Guard" - the "Black Detachment of Florian Geyer". The "Black Guard" was supposed to become, in the manner of the Hitlerite SS, the elite of the German revolutionaries, "the edge of the sword of the "Combat Commonwealth".

On October 7, 1932, the Third Imperial Congress of the KGRNS took place, at which representatives of the Werwolf, Oberland, Action, Landvolk and revolutionary SA were present as guests. On the. The congress discussed mainly issues relating to the "Black Guard". The central theme was the theme chosen by Strasser of the "breakthrough" of the German Revolution and the beginning of preparations for it. The venue for the congress, the town of Leuchtenberg, was not chosen by chance. It was supposed to demonstrate the connection between the Fighting Community and the young socialists. The fact is that in Leuchtenberg there was a strong youth socialist circle, consisting mainly of members of the German Freischar. This organization aimed to revive

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deliberately

development of true German democracy. Freishar collaborated with the Imperial Banner, the Young German Order of Arthur Maraun, and in its theoretical developments relied on the ideas of professors Adolf Reichweinen and Hans Freyer. Denying fascist and communist totalitarianism to the same extent, these politicized youth sought to implement a social system built on religious and social ethics. Members of the "Deutsche Freischar" established contacts with. revolutionary National Socialists and National Revolutionaries as early as 1950. Among their first allies from this camp were Friedrich Hielscher, Karl Petel and Otto Strasser. The discussion held on the theme "The German Nation with or against Marx" became their biggest event and was talked about all over Germany.

The third congress of the "Combat Commonwealth" lasted three days. It was attended by about 200 delegates and 250 guests. Strasser and Buchrucker decided to bet on external effects, on the visual design of the congress. In the few surviving photographs, one can see the new uniform of the revolutionary National Socialists: a black shirt, belt, black trousers, boots and a low black cap. All this was complemented by a special sign on the tie: a crossed silver sword and hammer. Their solemn procession was very reminiscent of the demonstrations of "werewolves" or SS men. Basically, the new uniform was issued by members of the Black Guard, which was supposed to demonstrate its ownership.

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attitude towards "a new aristocracy, a new layer of masters, a conscious minority."

On the evening of October 7, the executive committee made a report on the activities of the "Combat Commonwealth" over the past year and the revolutionary actions planned for the near future. Strasser drew the attention of the revolutionary National Socialists present at the new successes of the movement. In this regard, he called on regional leaders to further intensify advocacy. After that, re-elections of the executive committee of the KGRNS took place. There was no sensation. Strasser, Buchrucker and Blank again got into it. As a matter of fact, the congress itself began the next day, October 8th. At 2 pm Otto Strasser delivered a lengthy analytical report to the assembled delegates and guests on the weakness of the party parliamentary system. He predicted the speedy collapse of the Weimar Republic, but he hardly imagined that it would not bring him any joy. In the second part, Strasser spoke about the tasks of the "Commonwealth of Arms", which he already called the "knight's order" and "the officer school of the German revolution". After a short financial report, the leader of the Thuringian military district read out telegrams of welcome that came from the chairman of the Werwolf, Kloppe, the National Socialist Opposition represented by Gauleiter Roth, and the League of German National Communists. These congratulatory addresses were followed by friendly letters from Holland, Austria and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. The congress itself ended with the appointment of the head of the Black Guard.

Comparing the number of guests and congratulatory

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telegrams, it seemed that the "Black Front", as in 1931, remained a formal association of Strasserians, "werewolves" and some of the representatives of the "Landvolk". It is noteworthy that after the end of the plenary sessions, a closed "comradely dinner" was held, which was attended not only by well-known figures of the Black Front, but also by new faces: the publisher from Jena Diderik, the socialist professor Borinsky, the editor of the Opponent newspaper Harro Schulze - Boysen. The same Hulze-Boysen, who would later create the legendary "Red Chapel". These people expounded in detail their vision of socialism. It looked as if Strasser finally decided to listen to someone else's opinion. But in fact, he invited honored guests to show them the general assembly and the oath of a thousand members of the Black Guard. This was supposed to be a clear confirmation of the strength not only of the new unit, but of the entire Black Front.

The official closing of the congress took place the next day. After that, Strasser took part in an event held by the KKE. Such haste was due to the fact that Wilhelm Korn, a former member of the "Combat Commonwealth", was supposed to be the speaker at this meeting. Strasser, with his support group, wanted to prevent him from speaking at all costs. Strange as it may seem, Strasser received permission from the KPD to criticize Korn's position. The discussion between the former comrades-in-arms lasted an hour and a half, never interrupted by either side.

A few days after the end of the congress. "Black Front" was published "Manifesto of the Third

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th Imperial Congress". He developed the political theses put forward in October 1931. It was proclaimed that the "breakthrough of the German Revolution" had begun. It, the revolution, must proceed from the assertion of the originality of the German people and its national formation, resorting to the help of front-line experience and military experiences. After the collapse of the capitalist system occurs, as soon as the mistakes of the KKE and the NSDAP are realized, the Black Front will begin the socialist revolution and the national liberation war, which will be waged by the forces of all socialists. The brothers Strasser, Graf Reventlov, Severing, Richard Scheringer and many others will have to enter this front. It is this front that will overthrow the government of the "German Miliukov" - von Papen. Such an onslaught was supposed to put an end to the "epoch of Kerensky" in Germany, bringing to life the unstoppable element of the German revolution. Compared with 1931, the Third Imperial Congress did not bring anything new, except for the creation of the "Black Guard", which was supposed to give the "Black Front" a certain militaristic connotation. The theoretical views of the revolutionary National Socialists remained the same as in previous years. And this despite the fact that the foreign policy situation in which the Weimar Republic found itself has changed dramatically.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to analyze the then social composition of the Black Guard. It is known about its activities that the first groups were created by Buchrucker in August 1932 in Silesia, Halle and Berlin. On December 4, Black Front reported

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that in a number of local organizations: the SS split: some members of the security detachments of the NSDAP left the party, joining the Black Guard.

Very fragmentary information has come down to us about the leading cadres of the Black Guard. Heymann, a typical example of a National Socialist, was appointed its leader, who, after a series of setbacks, decided to leave the NSDAP and join the Combat Commonwealth. In 1932, this was far from an isolated incident. Among the Nazis who joined Strasser was Fischer, a member of the Saxon Landtag, who in September 1932 denounced the "Jesuit policy of the Hitler Party" by publishing an article with a similar title in the Munich Post. A massive outflow from the SA occurred in such large cities as Cologne, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Koenigsberg. At the same time, another split occurred in the Hitler Youth. But far from all those who left the NSDAP and its subdivisions joined the Combat Commonwealth. Some of them joined the KKE, others joined ANTIFA.

But back to Heymann. He was an NSDAP Kreisleiter in Bremerred, where he constantly clashed with his superiors. Heymann announced his entry into the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists" only when the Gau leadership expelled him from the party. With the support of Otto Strasser and his security forces, he carried out an event called the "deposition of Ernst Röhm." Heymann was a well-known politician in his district, and he was followed by several dozen members of the NSDAP, from which he formed one of the first cells of the Black Guard.

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In Berlin, the "Black Guard" was created gradually. Here she united Otto Strasser's bodyguards, several Walter Stennes storm troopers, as well as individual members of the "old

Guards of the SA", among whom were many associates of the legendary Horst Wessel. In December 1932, another cell of the "Black Guard" arose here, which was formed from former SS men who left the Nazi party. In early January, Strasser was waiting for success in Hamburg. The situation became so tense that the commander of the local attack aircraft, Steublin, together with his "SA regiment", broke away from the NSDAP and nailed to Strasser.

But the most interesting is the story of Wilhelm Kaiser. In 1925, when he was 17 years old, he joined the NSDAP. In 1927, he managed to create a local organization, the Hitler Youth. In 1928 he was seriously wounded in a street clash with the communists. His activity and organizational skills ensured rapid career growth. As early as 1929, the Kaiser was in charge. Nazi youth organization throughout the Rhineland, and on January 1, 1930, he was proclaimed not only an imperial orator, but also gained control over all the Nazi youth of western Germany. But at the same time, the Kaiser refused to recognize the legal path to power promoted by Hitler. In April 1932, with his many supporters, he created the "Revolutionary Liberation Movement", which operated in and around Cologne.

On December 18, 1932, the Revolutionary Liberation Movement joined the Fighting Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists.

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Now the Black Front in the Rhineland has not only its own newspaper, The German Way, but also a branch of the Black Guard. Until 1936, Wilhelm Kaiser was a prominent figure in the German resistance. He continued to fight against Hitler until he was arrested and imprisoned in a concentration camp.

But the history of the Black Guard itself was not something unique. The number of this organization hardly exceeded 300 people. When in January 1933 Strasser appointed a new general meeting of his guard detachments, about 50 people arrived at it. Hundreds of "Black Guards" who were present at the Third Imperial Congress were ordinary window dressing. However, this did not prevent the Nazi SA from taking the dwarf organization quite seriously. After the Black Guard was banned in February 1933, Buhruker and his wards were immediately arrested.

The existence of the "Black Guard" was followed with apprehension by the Weimar government. In December 1932, it carried out a series of searches and raids by the police in the hope of finding weapons and explosives, all to no avail.

However, it cannot be denied that in the last days of the existence of the Weimar Republic, Strasser managed to intensify his activities at the local level. Those who became disillusioned with Hitler joined him. The sudden activity and vigor of Strasser was a response to this revolutionary impatience. But these people, their radical socialism and desire for violence called into question further cooperation with the communists. Not

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despite the socialist phraseology, the "Black Guard" turned out to be more connected. with the NSDAP and its SA than with socialist or national revolutionary circles. No matter how hard Strasser tried, on the eve of Hitler's rise to power, the Combat Commonwealth was no longer the mobile movement it was in the summer of 1930. But it was precisely this imaginary activity that now attracted discontented members of the NSDAP to Strasser. He engaged in fruitless criticism of the legal Hitler way. By the beginning of 1953, the Combat Commonwealth was more diverse than ever. Strasser was joined by nationalists who were by no means always enthusiastic about the revolutionary socialist theses of their leader. As a result, ideological contradictions began to grow in the KGRNS. If earlier Strasser's headache was the left opposition and the National Bolsheviks, now he risked a quarrel with the right wing. As a result, different attitudes towards the Hitler regime arose. The socialist elements continued their struggle, while the nationalists, after the first successes of Hitler,

as Reich Chancellor, they preferred to support him. After all, they never abandoned his ideology, and they left the NSDAP for purely tactical reasons.

But that was later, and on December 4, 1932, the Military Commonwealth interpreted the appointment of Schleicher as the head of the government as the onset of a transitional era. The revolutionary National Socialists paid tribute to the strength and tenacity of General Schleicher. The appointment of a new chancellor meant a final victory over reaction. With the fall of Papen, "reaction

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lost the battle and it was possible to put an end to it. And although Hindenburg continued to cling to Papen, and financial circles were still ready to support the granting of emergency powers to him, the former chancellor could not oppose anything to the broad political coalition that stood behind Schleicher's back. In the opinion of the Combat Commonwealth, this political figure enjoyed favor in military circles, and besides, he was the youngest German general - he was only 50 years old. The way to the Reich Chancellery was paved by the parties of the center. His coalition included social democrats and trade union representatives, but they had no illusions about who was the main force in the new government. They chose the least evil, since the "social general" was a hundred times more attractive than Papen and a thousand times more beautiful than Hitler.

And then the "Black Front" repeated the old mistake - Strasser somewhere saw the influence of Hitler. They say that the Fuhrer was an oppositionist only for the public, but in fact he concluded a secret agreement with the new chancellor. This agreement allegedly not only gave the Nazis freedom of action, but also allowed them to actually rule the country. In tense relations between the government and the NSDAP, the Fuhrer's entourage was to blame, but not at all by himself, and certainly not by General Schleicher. Strasser argued that Schleicher's position could be called strong only with a certain stretch, since he did not have significant support in the Reichstag, and public opinion did not trust him. When the communists put forward a proposal for a vote of no confidence, the ruler

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Indeed, in the "Combat Commonwealth" they counted very much on the speedy fall of the Schleicher cabinet. In the Reichstag, the Chancellor could count on the votes of the Bavarian People's Party, the German People's Party and the German People's National Party. In addition, he set a course to achieve economic harmony in the country, which required the support of industrial circles, which could not forgive him for flirting with the trade unions.

All this indicated that Schleicher was in danger of becoming a "German Kerensky." His policy of "social openness" was simply torn apart by contradictions. The leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" hoped for the emergence of a "true Jacobin government" headed by Hitler or Gregor Strasser. It was to initiate the Jacobin Girondin revolution, which the German revolutionary socialists wanted to turn against the capitalist order.

In the crisis of the NSDAP, which was caused by Gregor Strasser, who decided to support Schleicher, the revolutionary National Socialists saw signs of the obvious decay of Hitlerism. Such conclusions were reinforced by the results of the elections in Thuringia, in which the NSDAP lost almost every fifth voter. "We welcome the results of these elections, as they showed us that the German people are tired of the electoral struggle and have made the right decision. This decision, of course, will not bring down the building of the present party system, since there is no party in the political arena that would pull the masses out of their lethargic sleep, fatigue and apathy. But we are glad that hour by hour

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the correctness of our path is confirmed. The failure in the Thuringian elections was due to the NSDAP losing the votes of the bourgeoisie. There was a fear that the Nazis and Marxists would create a united front in order to jointly contribute to the collapse of the republic.

According to the leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth", there were two centers of discontent in the NSDAP. Firstly, these were production cells, the ideas of which were constantly fought by the Munich leadership, as they demanded the implementation of socialist actions. Secondly, it was a conflict in the top leadership of the Nazi Party, caused by the dissolute life of homosexual Ernst Röhm. It was this delicate situation that should have predetermined the exit of Gregor Strasser from the NSDAP. The revolutionary National Socialists very much counted on such a double decomposition. They believed that the NSDAP was ready to collapse under the weight of internal problems.

But such predictions had nothing to do with reality, and therefore soon the hopes of the Strasserians collapsed like a house of cards. Gregor Strasser flatly refused to break party unity. And Schleicher himself supported the creation of a collective security system, which was perceived by the nationalists as an "anti-German foreign policy." The fact is that on December 11, 1932, in Geneva, the problems of designated collective security were discussed, to which it was supposed to involve the USA, France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany.

Even more fraught with consequences seemed to the Strasserians Hitler's agreement with the bourgeois

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parties to postpone the elections to the Reichstag for an indefinite period. This decision made the NSDAP faction "a devoted landsknecht of Schleicher, and this at a time when the government was increasingly isolated, having lost its main support - the Reich President Hindenburg."

The KGRNS even declared the "surprising vitality" of the Schleicher cabinet. Strasser quite rightly assumed that behind the scenes there was a representative coalition that aimed to undermine the authority of Hindenburg. On the one hand, Hitler was forced to reckon with Schleicher's position. But on the other hand, with his behind-the-scenes negotiations, he sought to eliminate the uncomfortable chancellor, or at least prevent him from establishing a semi-socialist dictatorship. Schleicher's alliance with Gregor Strasser and trade union leader Leipart was to be the basis of the proposed dictatorship. But Gregor Strasser failed. The persecution campaign organized by Goebbels completely discredited him in the eyes of the National Socialists. For Otto it was a double whammy. First, he interpreted the events of recent days as a revenge of capitalism over the socialist sentiments in the NSDAP, which almost won. Secondly, they rendered pointless any attempt by Schleicher to get closer to the National Socialist Left. The chancellor had no other way but to unite with the reactionary Papen, Hitler and Hindenburg. Schleicher's "epoch of transition" did not at all end with the victory of socialist ideas, as was expected in the "Combat Commonwealth". Hitler's tendency became obsessed

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top. In this deadly battle, the "German Kerensky" could no longer count on a miracle.

About a week before Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor of Germany, the Black Front published a review of the political events of the past month, which stated that the capitalist system had defeated the "Girondins" Schleicher, Gregor Strasser and Adolf Hitler. A

therefore the author of the article came to the conclusion that the "Girondins" were not able to defeat this system.

Fate played once again a cruel joke with the "prophet Strasser". On January 29, on the eve of Hitler's rise to power, he announced an alleged secret coalition of Nazis, German nationalists, Catholic parties, which aimed to bring to power a coalition government headed by Hjalmar Schacht. But the day after such a "brilliant" forecast, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich. It would seem that the long-awaited hour has come for the notorious "Girondins" to come to power, who, as Tracer hoped, would give impetus to the German revolution.

It is very difficult to say where the Black Front leader got his information from. Often, he provided reliable information about behind-the-scenes political negotiations. He often interpreted it in a form favorable to the revolutionary National Socialists. It was not just a political analysis, but his own. sort of political incantations that were supposed to strengthen the hopes of a group that had never had political weight.

Gregor Strasser amazed his brother by refusing the ministerial post. Revolutionary National social

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You were well aware of the differences between Gregor Strasser and Hitler. They believed that Gregor enjoyed great prestige in the NSDAP. In a long article published in the Black Front on December 18, 1932, the background of the contradictions between the leader of the left Nazis and the Fuhrer was described in great detail. This once again proved that Otto had fairly accurate information. Negotiations between the NSDAP and the parties of the center on the creation of a "black-brown coalition" in Prussia caused a conflict in the Nazi leadership. Goebbels and Goering could not accept the fact that they did not get ministerial posts, while Gregor Strasser was to become Minister-President of Prussia. This competition has led to a series of behind-the-scenes intrigues directed against Gregor. Goebbels hoped to persuade Hitler to abandon the idea of a coalition with the centrists.

Strasser turned out to be no less persistent - he demanded that Hitler make an immediate decision. It should not be forgotten that the NSDAP at that time had debts of 13 million marks, and therefore could hardly count on financing in the new elections. The result could be deplorable - the Nazis risked losing a couple of million voters. In order to buy time, Gregor Strasser suggested accepting Schleicher's ultimatum for purely tactical reasons. In this way, he planned to eliminate the threat from the chancellor and replenish the treasury of the party.

Gregor Strasser still hoped for an official change in the course of the party, which was supposed to mean a return to the old revolutionary National Socialism. And it was last woz

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the opportunity to win over the trade unions and the Marxist masses. Such a coalition was supposed to prevent the NSDAP from sliding into the level of an anti-Semitic economic party. Otto Strasser believed that in this case Hitler's Mamelukes would have their tails between their legs. It would also have dealt a mortal blow to the "clubfoot Fouche of the German Revolution"¹ who, ever since his "Bamberg betrayal, dreamed of overthrowing the seemingly unshakable giant Gregor Strasser". But the "giant" collapsed overnight, when intrigues began to be woven against him.

For the author of the article "The Expulsion of Gregor Strasser", this outcome of events was not unexpected. He seemed only to be struck by the passive behavior of Gregor himself. Author

could not understand why Strasser put up with the "vulgar Mussolini style of the brown house." In the "Combat Commonwealth" they really hoped that finally Strasser Sr. would break off relations with Hitler and join the struggle of the revolutionary National Socialists. "They, the simple party members and the proletarian core of the SA, beat 6 Gregor Strasser, the last guarantor of their social will; each of them conscience asks the question: will they continue to serve the fascist Hitler party, or will their love for National Socialism oblige them to fight against Hitler?"

Such a vivid description, of course, was sucked from the finger. Otto knew full well that Gregor would sacrifice his socialist ideals for the sake of the tactical unity of the party. Target

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1 So liked to call J. Goebbels Otto Strasser.

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to make a rather rude hint to Gregor Strasser, thereby preparing the rapprochement of the two brothers. In a literary impulse, the author of this publication even compared the departure of Gregor Strasser with the resignation that Wilhelm P. .

All these passages show only one thing: during December 1932, Otto and Gregor Strasser did not maintain any contact. But this was most likely Gregor's fault. For him, as a talented organizer, the extremist views of his brother were unacceptable, and therefore he was not even going to contact him.

Otto understood that his older brother condemned his political line. Strasser Jr. had the only opportunity to spread his views among Gregor's friends and stormtroopers. Otto decided to use the smear campaign that Goebbels and Goering unleashed against his brother. Otto lashed out at the Party's espionage tactics. Lieutenant Shulyyu, at that time Gregor's right-hand man, was, it turns out, secretly appointed to this post by Hitler in order to interfere with Strasser's activity. As part of this smear campaign, Goebbels presented the Combat Commonwealth as a pro-Jewish, politically impotent organization. He didn't want the Strasserians to benefit in any way from Gregor's departure from the NSDAP. The leftist Nazis should not have followed their leader. It was also necessary to calm down the production cells, which were very dissatisfied with the policies of Munich. Goebbels could not allow a new split in the NSDAP.

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When Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933, a very critical situation developed in the SA. But now Hitler could prevent discontent. His coming to power convinced many Nazis that the Fuhrer had calculated everything exactly and that the seemingly suicidal policy of the legal path had finally borne fruit.

After Gregor refused to split the NSDAP, Otto's hopes for the collapse of the Hitlerite party collapsed. Now the "Combat Commonwealth" could only count on unrest in the SA, where it had been unsettled since the time of Walter Shtennes. The dissatisfaction of the stormtroopers began to manifest itself already in 1931, first in Berlin and Hamburg. At the beginning of 1932, a statement by the Berlin SA was published in the press. It showed the public what an unsettling spirit reigned in the SA. The text said that the stormtroopers were betrayed and sold by the party leadership. They were abandoned to their fate. "The gentlemen from the Gariburg front used them

as a means, 6 as a burden, as amazed comrades in the SA visited their 6 infirmaries. Responsibility for the betrayal was assigned to the bosses from the department of Goebbels.

The newspaper "Cherny Front" tried more than once to become the mouthpiece of the SA, but its revolutionary appeals were not heard by the storm troopers. Anxiety began to intensify when Shtennes' stormtroopers began to hold "parties" at which they gathered opponents of the legal path. The police archives even contained a report about a meeting of opposition storm troopers. By mistake, the police rank enrolled them in the ranks of the Strasserians, but in fact they were the initiators

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events were performed by the revolutionary SA Walter Stennes. And it was not about some little-known people. At this drinking bout, stormtroopers of the level of Scharführers and even SA Gruppenfuehrers gathered.

The actions of this group, organized secretly from Munich as the "Union of National Socialist Front-line Soldiers", in fact did not pose any threat to the Hamburg branch of the NSDAP.

After the failure in the elections in August 1932, Strasser tried to use this discontent to create, together with the "Imperial Banner" and the "Red Fronts", the United Socialist Front. But his statements about "the main enemy - capitalism" did not find understanding among the storm troopers, for whom the "Reds" were always opponents.

After the conflict between Gregor Strasser and Hitler, the Black Front again published a call for storm troopers. "Gregor Strasser completed the chain of 'incidents' that happened to Mücke, Otto Strasser, Walter Stennes and many others. Honest Germans, honest socialists, true Protestants no longer have a place in the Hitler Party! Stormtroopers must raise a protest against Byzantine loyalty, non-German servility. You, Ippurmoviks, must join the struggle as ardent socialists, fanatical nationalists, staunch supporters of the people's socialist revolution.

On January 12, a new scandal erupted in connection with the SA. Strasser immediately lit up with the hope that the SA would finally rise up against Hitler. Stegmann, SA Gruppenfuehrer, member of the Reichstag, was dismissed from

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all positions after a conflict with Julius Streicher, the main anti-Semite in the NSDAP. Immediately, reports of squabbles in the leadership of the Nazi Party began to flicker in the national press. Despite the refutation of the Völkische Beobachter, rumors continued to be circulated in the press about the crisis in the SA, which risked "the 6th revolt of the Landsknechts of the NSDAP". On January 25, 1933, Stegmann created a new organization, which included about 100 people. He was joined by sympathetic attack aircraft from Nuremberg, Franconia, the Ruhr. In general, the split affected only two Gaus and the NSDAP lost only two thousand people. However, Stegmann's crisis was no match for the split caused by Stennes. But the political crisis could escalate, triggering a wave of violence and armed actions, which were increasingly talked about in the SA.

Strasser not only failed to establish contact with Stegmann, he was able to plan future joint activities. Even Hitler's rise to power did not prevent the "supreme leader" of the "Black Front" from hoping for an escalation of conflict in the Hitlerite party. The fiasco of Gregor Strasser, the inability of the "Battle Commonwealth" to take advantage of the unrest in the assault squads showed once again that the Otto Strasser group had no influence on the NSDAP. The Strasserians were unable not only to prevent, but to somehow hinder Hitler's rise to power.

The "military commonwealth" turned out to be completely unprepared for the fall of the Schleicher cabinet and the appointment of Hitler as the new chancellor of Germany. Strasser like

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We remember that Y. Shakht predicted the emergence of a transitional government. Doubting that Hitler would be able to stay in power for a long time, on February 8, 1933, the Black Front came out under the heading "HITLER-KERENSKY".

Schleicher could not cope with the worst enemy of Germany - capitalism. For this, the chancellor, according to the Strasserians, had neither the will nor the strength. His government's flirtation with the unions caused deep concern among the big business, who decided to rally against the new threat. Hugenberg, the father of German reaction, launched an attack on the office of the "Socialist General" with the help of his German People's National Party. It was he, Hugenberg, who began to weave intrigues that resulted in the Cologne meeting between Hitler and Papen. It was decided to save heavy industry by any means.

Seeing no deadly consequences, the Combat Commonwealth welcomed the fall of Schleicher, who paved the way for the Girondins. Strasser dreamily declared that the Schleicher government, "the vanguard of the Gironde, its right wing," gave new strength to Hitler, who would be swept away by the "Jacobins of the German Revolution." "Hitler-Kerensky must embody for himself the open phase of German Girondinism. The presence in his cabinet of Papen and Hugenberg (representatives of economic reaction), as well as Count Schwerin-Kozik and von Neurath (representatives of state reaction) suggests only one thought: Hitler is a hostage of reaction!"

But in fact, for Strasser, Hitler was only

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only an alleged hostage, because in reality the dynamics of National Socialism were so powerful that the reaction was unable to cope with it. The "fighting commonwealth" pointed not only to the need of the German people, but also to the desire of the Hitlerite cabinet to cope with the causes of this poverty. But National Socialism turned out to be chained in three chains: the bourgeois code of laws, the Weimar Constitution and the Versailles Diktat. Since Hitler depended not only on President Hindenburg, but also on reactionary forces, he could not break all the chains. Strasser believed that the new chancellor would not receive support from the people and could not count on active, friendly cooperation with the working people.

The contradictions between the National Socialist dynamics and Hitler's reformism were to be aggravated to the limit. During 1933, the tense relations between the people and the government, between Hitler and the left wing of the NSDAP, between the conservatives and the united front of the German revolutionaries were to heat up to the limit. "For Graf Reventlov, Gregor Strasser, Karl Kaufmann, numerous socialists from the national socialist production cells, it will be a burden to wonder whether they really are national socialists." And at that moment, the "Combat Commonwealth" should have called for a fight against the powerless "Gironde", which would fall under the pressure of the Jacobin revolutionaries. "This burden will become the hour of the Black Front!" But when Hitler came to power, Strasser for the first time

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said the fight against capitalism not by the forces of a united front of socialists, but with the help of a united alliance of socialists and nationalists. This rapprochement with the national forces, by which right-wing paramilitary groups were meant, began in September 1932 with the publication of the call for the "Steel Helmet". Strasser hoped that by the time of the final break between the "Jacobins" and the "Girondins", the right-wing paramilitary organizations would occupy

either a neutral position, or take the side of the fighters of the German Revolution. The "Storm Troops" would have to leave Hitler's government party.

The day after Hitler came to power, the executive committee of the Combat Commonwealth held an extraordinary meeting. On February 5, the appeal "To all fighters of the Black Front" was printed and distributed. It said that each member of the organization must direct all efforts, aspirations, and, if necessary, sacrifice their lives in order to achieve the victory of the German Revolution. It seemed that Strasser did not understand what was happening with the country. If we turn to other leaflets of this period, we will see that nothing fundamentally changed in them. Strasser still heart-rendingly called on the storm troopers to the united front of the German Revolution.

On February 12, 1933, the Combat Commonwealth published the last legal issue of the Black Front. In it, Strasser gave forecasts "for now and for tomorrow." He, as always, hovered in the clouds. In the program of the new government, announced by Hitler on

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radio, the banning of newspapers, the widespread violence of unbridled stormtroopers Strasser saw not the signs of an advancing dictatorship, but the breath of an approaching revolution. "The opinion of Marxists of all stripes that fascism is now dominating Germany, because they take National Socialism for reaction." Strasser seriously believed that he was the only one who understood historical processes. He brushed aside the fears of the communists. "They are afraid of uncertainty. At the same time, it is obvious to the revolutionary National Socialists that chaos is the sprout of the future, for death is replaced by new life." "National Socialism is a revolutionary popular movement," he continued, "whose unbridled dynamics is 6,000 times stronger than state legitimacy. This indicates that National Socialism cannot exist in a given economy, a given state, a given culture; it is by its very nature designed to undermine economic, social and cultural forms. National Socialism beat Hitler and will achieve the victory of revolutionary transformations in spite of Hitler!"

Other articles in this issue of Black Front emphasized the "Girondine" character of Hitler's new program. On the basis of stock news, the Strasserians came to the conclusion that the rise in stock prices was proof that capital had complete confidence in Hitler, knowing that he would never pursue a socialist course. The authors of these articles called the coalition government reactionary, since in ten days in power Hitler did not hold a single revolutionary

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activities that the people wanted. What the people wanted, no doubt, only Strasser knew.

"These ten days of impotence, which did not shake the world, brought the following changes. Exchanges continue to work. The gold standard remained at 6 strength. The accounting of interest on debts has not been discontinued. Winter aid for the unemployed has not been introduced. Banks have not been socialized. The nationalization of enterprises did not follow. The bourgeois code of laws has been preserved. The allocation of money according to the plans of Dawes and Young is proceeding as usual. The Lausanne Agreement, under which we owe 3 billion marks, has not been liquidated. Foreign debts are returned without delay. Theoretically proclaimed "slave rights" did not find practical expression. The "favorably acquired" bureaucratic hierarchy remained untouched. The rights of the German sovereign states are not affected. The Treaty of Versailles was not even considered to be abolished. Hitler's government program recognizes itself as responsible for capitalism and executive policy, strong on the inside, weak on the outside. Reaction can triumph. The stock exchanges of Paris, London, Rome and Wall Street can raise the banner of victory, the hour of the revolution has not yet come.

But Strasser had to continue his preparations for the indicated revolution in the underground. On February 15, 1933, the Nazi government banned the Black Front. It began a long persecution of the Strasserian movement, which, despite its bold attacks, posed no threat to Hitler. Moreover, by attacking the Weimar Republic, it cleared the way for him to power.

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CHAPTER 6 THE FALL OF GREGOR STRASSER

After breaking off relations with his brother, Gregor Strasser plunged headlong into political work. After Hitler, he was the most active figure in the Nazi movement. Gregor was the main engine of the Hitlerite party. However, Strasser's attempt to modify the party program from within, placing more emphasis on anti-capitalist positions than was formulated in the 1920 version, to reorient Hitler, ended in failure. Whether Strasser was thinking more, whether he hoped to undermine Hitler's position as a leader, remains unclear. He was a much brighter personality than all the other Nazi leaders, and more suitable for the role of leader than them, but of a completely different cast than Hitler. He had an incomparably more direct character, was a talented organizer and a good speaker, but he lacked the charismatic strength of Hitler. Strasser was not the right type - people like him don't create myths. He understood the superiority of Hitler and increasingly relegated to the background.

Contrary to popular belief, Gregor Strasser did not completely abandon his socialist principles. This is evidenced by at least one article published in the early 30s. In it, Gregor quite openly stated: "We National Socialists are enemies, sworn enemies of the existing capitalist system with its exploitation of the economically weak ... and we are determined to do whatever it takes.

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began to destroy this system. Goebbels followed the same line as the Gauleiter of Berlin and challenged the communists in one of their strongholds while using his talent as a propagandist to attack the "money hogs of capitalist democracy". Gregor Strasser remained in the party and continued to have some influence. Perhaps he did it on purpose, so that when the time comes, there will be an alternative candidate for Hitler as a "socialist". He could not completely abandon his ideas: "The people are protesting against the economic system, which thinks only in terms of banknotes... We have a significant anti-capitalist thrust in our country. It is a natural protest against a decaying society ... "(From a speech by Strasser on the radio on July 14, 1932.)

Hitler often used Gregor Strasser's anti-capitalism even to his advantage. Here is at least one example. In the fall of 1928, the leadership of the country's main conservative force, the German People's National Party, passed into the hands of Alfred Hugenberg. fanatical, ambitious and authoritative king of the press, who made his fortune on inflation and built himself a whole complex of newspapers, agencies, as well as the leading German film company UFA. It was much more important for him to use all these means to influence the minds and introduce his reactionary views than to increase capital. He set himself the goal of destroying the "socialist republic", undermining the influence of the trade unions and opposing the class struggle of the lower classes to the class struggle of the upper classes. For this he is ready

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was to donate huge sums, withdrawing them from the party in protest against Hugenberg's policy, but he was not interested in them, but in the opportunity to win over the masses to his side, and he

believed that in the person of Hitler he found the person who would do this for him.

Hitler brilliantly seized the previous opportunity. At first, he met Hugenberg's proposal to join forces and launch a joint campaign against the Young plan with some reserve: he knew that not only radical members of the party would resist, but also many loyal Nazis, who were alarmed that he was associating with a sworn enemy not only trade unions, but also any government measures and reforms. And if he should have accepted Hugenberg's proposal, it would have been on Hitler's own terms: complete freedom of campaign and the transfer to the Nazis of a significant share of the funds allocated for its financing. When these conditions were accepted, as a final touch, Hitler put forward another condition: to appoint Gregor Strasser, who had proven himself a sworn enemy of the capitalists, to be the representative of the Nazi Party on the joint finance committee. Few Nazi leaders approved of Hitler's deal, but he managed to convince them that they should be patient and see what happens. Indeed, none of them protested openly or resigned.

In 1932, Hitler appointed Strasser as head of the Imperial organization of the Nazi Party, which did not prevent them from constantly quarreling. Your choice

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On July 31, 1932, the Nazis received 230 seats, becoming the strongest party in the Reichstag. Hitler was about to appoint Strasser as head of the Nazi faction, but at the last moment he chose Hermann Göring.

Over time, Gregor Strasser became the de facto leader of all election campaigns conducted by the Nazis. Mass rallies were the main tool in the arsenal of Nazi propaganda. During almost every election campaign, more than 200 rallies a day were held in cities and towns throughout Germany. Hitler, Goebbels and Strasser traveled all over the country, speaking at the largest rallies. The speeches of the three party leaders abounded with templates: "We are at a turning point in German history! shouted Hitler from a flower-decorated podium. We are fighting today! We will fight tomorrow." The direction the Nazis were trying to take was not clear. Nevertheless, the flow of words and the emotionality of the speeches fascinated people. Soon, Hitler promised, life would again have meaning and purpose, and the German people would once again feel "joy in their hearts." To achieve a greater effect of such speeches, posters were put up in the cities, leaflets were scattered, and they were invited to a review of the legions of the SA, who sang "Wake up, Germany" in the streets. 50,000 records of speeches were distributed during the campaign. And from loudspeakers in the streets, and from trucks sounded appeals of the Nazis. There were even propaganda films: their unusualness attracted the attention of both the townspeople and

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Introduction

and rural residents. Much of this rhetoric, whether spoken, printed, recorded, or filmed, can be summed up in one message: "Adolf Hitler—
our last hope."

Early in 1932, Hitler had his first opportunity to choose between the negotiation process and the electoral process. In May 1932, von Hindenburg was to retire. The group of advisers to the president did not want this at all. So Brüning tried to extend the presidency for one or two years simply by having a vote of confidence in the president in the Reichstag.

Although Hitler continued to scathingly attack Brüning for the devastating consequences of his policies, the chancellor believed that Hitler could accept such a proposal and avoid testing his myth in competition with a field marshal, regarded by millions of Germans as a symbol of perseverance in a disordered world. Hitler showed undoubted interest and took part in negotiations with Brüning, von Schleicher and Brüning himself. Hitler demanded an answer to only one question: what did he get after that? Apparently, he was told - nothing. Then another question followed: was Hitler ready for open competition with the President?

The Nazis were sharply divided on this subject. Gregor Strasser believed that von Hindenburg could not be defeated and that Hitler should not challenge him. He was for negotiations, not for the fight in the elections,

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measures, centrists) at the local and all-German level and for spreading influence over various social groups. In this way, the Nazis could gradually seize power without running the risk of being defeated in an open struggle.

Strasser's main opponent was Goebbels, who participated in Hitler's candidacy in the elections, hoping (as can be seen from his diary) that the election campaign would put him, head of the propaganda department, in first place among Hitler's assistants. The adoption of negotiating tactics and participation in coalitions would have strengthened the influence of Strasser as the head of the organizational management of the party. Most of all, Goebbels was supported by Goering and Röhm. Goering had no influence in the party and could rise to prominence only if Hitler came to power and made him a minister, while Röhm needed a flurry of electoral activity in order to vent the energy of the stormtroopers.

On Election Day, July 31, 1932, a special edition of one of the Viennese newspapers under the heading "Heil Schicklgruber" published documentary materials stating that Hitler's father was illegitimate. However, this did not affect the outcome of the elections. The Nazis received 13,732,779 votes, half a million more than their closest rivals, the Social Democrats and Communists combined. This amounted to 97.3 percent of the total number of voters. And Hitler invited his party to put forward his candidacy for the post of Chancellor.

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This was opposed by Georg Strasser, as it contradicted his line on establishing power by a coalition of right-wing parties. But Hitler insisted on his own. A messenger was sent to Berlin to inform Schleicher of Hitler's demands. The general did not take them seriously, because he was sure that Hindenburg would not dare to honor the former corporal with such an honor. He invited Hitler to a meeting that took place on August 5 near Berlin. The Führer demanded for himself not only the post of chancellor, but also the adoption of a law giving him the right to emergency powers, and in fact, to establish a dictatorship. Schleicher relented, and Hitler got the impression that Hindenburg could also be persuaded.

On December 2, 1932, Kurt von Schleicher became the first general since 1890 to hold the post of Reich Chancellor. He immediately invited Gregor Strasser to his place and offered him the post of Vice Chancellor and Prime Minister of Prussia. Strasser reacted positively to this, but warned that he had to coordinate his appointment with the Führer. But it was not easy to get to Hitler, to break through his entourage. By the way, Strasser did not hide his dislike for his associates. In a conversation, he called Goering "a cruel egoist, for whom the main thing is

hold a high post and who doesn't give a damn about Germany". Strasser called Goebbels "a lame-footed and two-faced devil", and Rem - "pig".

Gregor, having enlisted the support of Hitler, offered Schleicher a new ally - the leader of the free German trade unions, Herr Leipart. And again the Prussian nobility was alarmed. What are they for

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have Brüning been overthrown if the government is again moving to the left?

Realizing their mistake, Hugenberg and Schacht resumed negotiations with Hitler. Von Papen also sought an alliance with him. The former chancellor's reconciliation with Adolf took place in Cologne, at the home of Herr Schröder, a wealthy Jewish financier who paid the bills for the new Nazi campaign.

"All the same, as long as the old man is alive, I will never

well, chancellor," Hitler said that day. "However, my friend Oskar von Hindenburg, son of the president, told me something completely different," replied

Teal von Papen.

It was a deliberate lie on von Papen's part, but it was enough to make Adolf terribly angry with Gregor.

Information about Schleicher's proposals came to Hanfstaengl through Papen's entourage, and from him to Hitler. The Fuhrer, who was strongly incited by Goebbels against Strasser, took Gregor's act as a betrayal. A few days later in Berlin, when Adolf met Gregor, a huge scandal erupted. Goering and Goebbels, who were completely bewildered by the creation of the Schleicher-Strasser-Leypart government, skillfully fanned Hitler's fury in order to forever discredit Gregor and Leypart in his eyes. "Gregor," Goering said, "wants power to overthrow and then destroy you."

Hitler, pale with rage, threw accusations in the face of Gregor Strasser, repeating the slander of Goering and Goebbels.

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— Herr Hitler, do you really think that I can-. ben on such acts? asked Gregor, looking straight into the face of the man whom he had served faithfully and faithfully for many years, but had so far refused to call "my Fuhrer."

- Yes! Hitler shouted back. - I believe in it! I am convinced of it! I have proof!

Gregor turned abruptly and left the room without a word. That same evening, he resigned from all posts, renounced the mandate of the Reichstag and left with his family for the south. He did not talk to anyone, did not let anyone in on his secret, but remained in the party, deciding, as an ordinary soldier, to continue the struggle for ideals dear to him and for the person who had betrayed and slandered him.

On December 8, he sent Hitler a letter in which he announced that he was resigning from all posts in the party, since the Führer no longer trusted him. He wrote sadly about his devotion and

a long-term dream—now shattered—of a coalition with visionary men who would govern Germany. Although Strasser ended the letter with the words "yours sincerely," he did not mention what plans he might have for the considerable body of party members under his influence. Hitler lost hope, almost half convinced that Strasser would take his supporters and destroy the party.

In the Kaiserhof, this message, according to Goebbels, was perceived as a "bomb explosion". Hitler was in such shock that he could not immediately make a decision. To call Strasser, who was waiting for this, he did not

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came to mind. For several hours he tossed about, terribly worried, in his room, thinking about suicide if the party "falls apart in pieces." But Strasser remained loyal. When there was no answer, Gregor packed his suitcase, went to the station and took the train to Munich.

The next morning the newspapers came out with sensational headlines about Strasser's resignation. Hitler's indignation knew no bounds. According to him, Gregor sent his message not just anywhere, but to "Jewish newspapers". The Fuhrer even began to cry, shouting that a former friend had stabbed him in the back five minutes before complete victory.

Nevertheless, seizing on the offer to call Strasser and settle the conflict, Hitler sent the chauffeur Schreck to find him "anywhere". But at this time, Gregor was already in his Munich apartment and hastily preparing to leave for Italy. To a friend who came to see him, Strasser said: "I am a man doomed to death." He advised his friend not to come to him again and added in parting: "Whatever happens, mark my words: from now on Germany is in the hands of an Austrian, this born liar, a former officer, a pervert and lame. And I tell you: the last one is worse than all of them. This is Satan in human form."

In the meantime, the parties and the Gauleiters gathered at Goering's Reichstag and adopted a statement condemning Strasser. Hitler, stammering, said that he was shocked by his betrayal. Those present gave the Fuhrer an ovation and assured him of their loyalty to the end, no matter what happened.

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On June 13, 1933, before leaving for Venice to meet with the Duce, Adolf Hitler, now Chancellor of Germany, sent for Gregor. They did not meet after a stormy conversation provoked by the intrigues of Papen, Goering and Goebbels. |

"I suggest you the Ministry of National Economy, Strasser. Accept this appointment, and between us, we can still save the day.

"I accept him, Herr Hitler," said Gregor, "on the condition that Goering and Goebbels leave, an honest man cannot work with these persons.

Gregor's answer, whose authenticity was confirmed by his brother Paul, was the answer of a real gentleman, but not a politician. Trying to get rid of Goebbels and Goering at the same time was as successful as breaking through a stone wall with your head. Goering could have been sacrificed to Gregor. He was at odds with Himmler, to whom he did not want to cede control of the Berlin Gestapo. Himmler was the chief of police in South Germany and insisted on the subordination of all police organizations in the Reich to him personally. Adolf in this dispute

avored Himmler, because he did not like the fact that Goering went over to the reactionaries. He also wanted Gregor back.

Goebbels, however, was absolutely necessary for the Führer. Despite the attitude of Adolf towards Röhm, revealed at the last meeting of the cabinet, Goebbels secretly negotiated with the latter from the name of its owner.

The struggle for Hitler took place between the forces of conservatism and the new, evil forces generated by him; and between these two forces he

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hesitated, hostage to his own indecision.

Dissatisfaction, however, continued to exist. The "Jacobins" accused the "Girondins" of weakness. The SA, which, unlike the SS, were swornly loyal to the party and loyal to the ideal, not to the Führer, consisted of radicals - three million Germans who were dissatisfied with the policies of Papen, Hugenberg and Schacht.

"When will the second revolution begin?" - such was the question that began to be heard in their ranks.

Gregor Strasser, at that time a simple ordinary member of the party, received hundreds and thousands of letters. "Renew your actions," said his correspondents. "Only you alone can save National Socialism. Open the Führer's eyes. Goering's people are blinding him..."

Gregor was well aware that all his letters were opened and read before they reached him. On the other hand, there was also Rem, the leader of the Brownshirt army, with hundreds of minor leaders completely devoted to him. Social questions did not concern them, but they were hostile to the generals and resented the fact that the army kept aloof from the party. Rem himself was an officer and knew the opinion of the German military very well. The army despised the "brownshirts"; she simply used Hitlerism as a mask behind which she pursued her traditional ones. goals. Rem lived in Bolivia and learned in practice that the political party is helpless without the support of the army. The generals could overthrow any government on any day they pleased. Sam Strasser

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since the late 1920s, he was perceived by attack aircraft as a defender of their interests. Thus, in August 1930, on the eve of the Shtennes mutiny, one stormtrooper wrote indignantly to Gregor Strasser that he had been arrested more than thirty times and was accused. eight times for "assault and battery, resisting the police and other offenses that are natural to the Nazis." As a result of his activities, he claims to have been injured at least twenty times. "I have knife scars on the back of my head, on my left shoulder, on my lower lip, on my right cheek, on the left side of my upper lip, and on my right arm." For all this, he did not receive a pfennig from the party, but, having squandered his inheritance, "faced a financial collapse."

The front of Gregor Strasser and Röhm was formed in opposition to the front of Hindenburg, Hugenberg, Papen and Goering, who were in alliance with the industrialists. Hitler still hesitated as dissatisfaction grew. He knew that he must act, but he had no idea how. At the end of June 1934, Hitler nevertheless made a decision. In one fell swoop, he decided to eliminate all opponents. The action of the bloody purge that swept across the camp on June 30, 1934, became known throughout the world under the name of the "Night of the Long Knives".

Among the destroyed objectionable was also Gregor Strasser. Hitler did not forget the man who: did so much for the political organization of the party and who left it, being a victim of the intrigues of Goering and Goebbels, proudly, without saying a word. The Führer retained respect for him. He forbade his henchmen to touch him, but Goering, having a shi-

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fateful authority, disregarded the prohibition. Gregor was no longer involved in politics. He headed the pharmaceutical company Schering-Kahlbaum. But this was not enough to disarm his enemies, Goering and Himmler. Himmler instructed Heydrich personally to oversee the "closing" of this old account. On the morning of June 30, Strasser was brought to the Gestapo prison at Columbia House. He was placed together with the arrested SA chiefs. After dinner, an SS man came for him to take him, as he put it, to a special solitary cell. The SS man opened the door of one of the cells, let Strasser through, closed the door and left. A minute later, a shot rang out. Strasser was not killed, the bullet only grazed his neck, breaking through an artery. He fell, feeling the life drain from him with every beat of his heart that sent trickles of blood against the brick wall. Punctually following the order received, Heydrich personally checked whether the order of the Reichsführer was being carried out, and, seeing how the prisoner was clinging to life, ordered "to leave this boar to bleed". This was the custom among the SS, who verbally attached such importance to "honor": to insult those who were killed.

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Part 5

STRASSERIANS IN THE ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE

Chapter 1

REVOLUTIONARY NATIONAL SOCIALISTS IN AUSTRIA

Neither the banning of the "Black Front" in February 1933, nor the arrests and persecution of the most prominent members of the "Combat Commonwealth" could liquidate revolutionary National Socialism. The revolutionary National Socialists continued their struggle against Hitler, but already as part of the national and international resistance. At first, the Strasserians created the Vienna and Czechoslovak Resistance Centrals from various political opposition groups, which were assessed by the Gestapo as exceptionally dangerous opponents. Historical literature, giving preference to various communist and democratic resistance groups, timidly avoided subjects related to national socialist anti-fascism.

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From 1925 to 1930, the Austrian organization of the NSDAP was not even aware of the existence of the radical theses of the North German left wing of National Socialism. The emergence of the Nazi Party in this country took place under the strictest control of Munich, which in every possible way prevented the formation of any internal opposition. When the conflict between Otto Strasser and Hitler broke out, the Munich leadership forbade the still weak Austrian National Socialist press to report on this incident. Moreover, it was forbidden to publish articles that expressed points of view that somehow differed from the official position of the Nazi leadership.

The conflict between the left wing and Hitler in those days was of interest only to the German National Socialist Labor Party (DNSAP), the historical predecessor and main competitor of the Hitlerite party. The DNSAP was headed by Karl Schulz, who on July 5, 1930, in his weekly German Workers' Press, published an article superficially describing the departure of Major Buchrucker and Gregor (!) Strasser from the NSDAP. Schultz himself admired any event that weakened the NSDAP in one way or another. He ended his account of the confrontation between Hitler and Strasser with the following comments: "Judging by

reports, this is a significant event. At general meetings, we will continue to follow the expulsion of Strasser."

On July 12, 1930, another article appeared, 'which was devoted only to the situation in Severoger

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Mansk branches of the NSDAP. The exceptional detail of this material was justified by the fact that the Austrian public knew virtually nothing about the events taking place in Germany. And finally, on July 19, Schultz published a long report on the situation in Germany, which was based only on the propaganda materials of the revolutionary National Socialists. The fact that these campaign materials were sent from the Berlin Bureau of the "Combat Alliance of Revolutionary National Socialists" did not mean that Strasser had begun cooperation with Schultz. The fact is that at that time the revolutionary National Socialists sent out their agitation to all German and Austrian conservative, nationalist and militaristic organizations.

So, in the article "What does the Strasser group want? Schulz wrote: "It is regrettable that Hitler's stubbornness and dictatorial habits split the National Socialist movement in Germany. But this should serve as a lesson to those who believed and still believe that the National Socialist idea can belong to one person. It is not surprising that the opposition group of Otto Strasser, which has been around 6 Germany, points out in its appeal that the Munich leadership falsified and blurred the movement. That, after all, the true National Socialist visions were replaced by the personal views of the dictatorial leadership, which often, too often, had a negative impact. This contradiction between absolute and spiritual guidance must one day lead to open conflict, since the Munich leadership did not realize that yes

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the absolute leader must listen to people like Otto Strasser, Count Reventlov. Munich did not understand this. The contradictions escalated, and Goebbels, Hitler's servant, energetically got rid of these people. But by such means it is impossible to hush up the conflict and, moreover, to discredit talented people. Now we will get acquainted with the ideas of Otto Strasser, which are very revealing. His new party wants to represent undistorted national socialism. He declares that he will conduct agitation mainly among the working masses in order to free the working-class movement from the errors of Marxism and lead it to the National Socialist camp. After this appeal, we are inclined to think that in the political struggle this group will be guided by all sorts of positive ideas. We do not know how big this organization is, but such a factor as Kampf-Verlag cannot be underestimated, which is especially valuable, because now this publishing house is at the head of the Strasser group. It is impossible to foresee the future, but one can say: Munich, not taught by the split of 6 Austria, will nevertheless draw conclusions from the present situation. Attacks on this opposition group, as has already happened (Major Buchrucker had his nose broken and Grantz badly wounded), will not silence these people. The future will show us: either Munich will continue to destroy the best forces of the movement in a fratricidal struggle, or it will make concessions.

Shulu suggested to Strasser that they create a joint "Workers' Community". But in this situation, the Austrian was interested not so much in Strasser as in himself.

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the existence of such an organization. It seemed to Schultz that this was quite a sufficient argument to start negotiations with Hitler. The leader of the DNSAP wanted to unite under his "spiritual" leadership the entire National Socialist movement in Austria, where the autonomy of the Nazi groups, which adhered to the most diverse political tendencies, was still preserved.

Strasser did not accept this offer. Apparently, the lack of time and the uncertainty of the Schultz group had an effect. Strasser published his negative answer in the press in August 1930. It wasn't just non-cooperation. Otto Strasser subjected Schultz's thesis about the role of Adolf Hitler in the process of the "German Revolution" to the most merciless criticism. In *The National Socialist*, Strasser stated that the Combat Commonwealth regarded Hitler as the creator of National Socialism. In addition, he recalled the specifics of the formation of National Socialism in Austria and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. In conclusion, Strasser, in a boorish manner, recommended Schultz to read Adolf Berner's work on this topic, *The Striving for National Socialism*.

In September 1930, Schulz published an article about the "national-bolshevik" methods of the "fascist" NSDAP (well, a combination ...) and spiritual aspirations that should promote the alliance of the Nazis with the communists. "The events in Germany have shown that the Hitlerite movement in its electoral tactics is so close to Bolshevism that it holds common meetings with the Communists, and the speakers from the KPD broadcast under the protection of storm troopers. The Hitler Party showed the failure of the socialist

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a sco-demonic face to lure workers; the communists, on the other hand, carry on revolutionary socialist work in the left camp and curse the "bourgeoisie" at their meetings in order to make the workers their friends. But the communists know that the Hitler Party is feeding the bourgeois-nationalist electorate and is eager to bring black-white-red fascism to power in the most radical way. Hitler is now following the path of importing Mussolinieb fascism to Germany. What the Hitler Party is now has nothing to do with National Socialism. In essence, it is fascist, its methods are national-bolshevik, and its irresponsibility is worthy of the communists.

Although everything is turned upside down in these statements, they contain two interesting points that are fundamentally new for the ideology of the NSDAP. It seems that Schulz borrowed from Strasser the thesis about the internal fascistization of the NSDAP, which not only made it possible to attract the votes of the bourgeoisie and right-wing voters, but also significantly affected the ideology and political practice of the NSDAP. The reference to a possible alliance between the Communists and the Nazis was only a disguised reproach to the "Combat Commonwealth", which maintained contacts with the KKE. For Schulz, the very essence of national socialism was opposed to communism, and therefore the representatives of these movements could not have either common interests or common tactics of action. Strasser decided not to respond to this criticism - not the kind of figure to pay attention to. But this political squabble did not worsen relations between the two National Socialist groups.

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roves. At the very least, the Berlin Bureau of the "Combat Commonwealth" continued to send Schultz their propaganda materials. In addition, one should not forget that Schultz's article was mainly directed against Hitler. In another article, "Save National Socialism," he again put forward the idea of fighting against fascism and any attempt to establish a totalitarian dictatorship. He developed these themes in his speech at a meeting held at the Zur Stadt Bamberg Hotel, which, by the way, was also attended by Strasser's revolutionary National Socialists.

Contacts between Schultz and Strasser began to take on a more creative character. The ideas of all the books and pamphlets were detailed in the German Workers' Press. So, for example, from February to March 1931, this newspaper published five large excerpts from Herbert Blank's book "Adolf Hitler - Wilhelm III". It received positive feedback from Schultz and was even recommended for reading by "all honest National Socialists."

Shulu watched with great interest the mutiny of the Berlin SA. At that time, this Austrian National Socialist was counting on the strengthening of anti-Hitler sentiment in the NSDAP. And although the Austrian press did not pay any attention to the events in Berlin, the Austrian government circles showed interest in the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists". Then the Austrian spies who worked in Germany sent detailed messages about the goals and activities of the "Combat Commonwealth". At the same time, the Austrian embassy received an assignment from the federal consul

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analyze the activities of the Strasserians. It was an integral part of the study of radical groups operating in Germany. Strasser's program was assessed by Austrian officials as "radical, having a Bolshevik tinge." In general, the "Combat Commonwealth" was assessed by the Austrian embassy as an organization that was of great importance, but did not pose any threat to Austria. In July 1931, it was believed in Vienna: "The above-named grouping can hardly find adherents in Austria, since the Fighting Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists has only a small communications bureau and a press bureau at our country's disposal. ". The latter, by the way, was led by Franz Hager, whose task was to distribute several copies of the German Revolution in Vienna and nearby cities. The Austrian leadership calmed down - the revolutionary National Socialists had no chance of success in this country.

During this period, two political groups fought each other in Vienna, striving to represent the ideology of revolutionary national socialism in Austria. Strasser could not neglect either one or the other. On one side was Karl Lossmann, who founded the League of German Socialists. His organization throughout 1929-1930 constantly accused the NSDAP of reformism and betrayal of socialist interests. But basically the activity of this union was limited to calls for a revolutionary struggle against capitalism. Another organization was the Association of the National Socialist German Working Youth Aust

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Visrea Vatrii. Its leader was Oskar Pahl, the former head of Schulz's youth organization. Austrian officials assessed his views as revolutionary nationalist. But revolutionary National Socialism, whether it was Strasser or Austrian, was little known to local politicians. He played no part in the civil war that was tearing the republic apart. The leadership of the "Combat Commonwealth" with undisguised interest watched the civil war in Austria, the actions of the Heimwehr (the Austrian analogue of the volunteer corps-freikors) and the coming to power of the government of Dollfuss. In order to create a powerful organizational base in Austria, Otto Strasser developed a special "Black Front" strategy, which involved an alliance with any forces ready to fight against Hitler. Whereas the Strasserian press had previously portrayed the Germans as the "watchdogs of the bourgeoisie", as the NSDAP became the target of these armed alliances, the revolutionary National Socialists began to see them as a potential ally. After the assassination attempt on Dollfuss, the Austrian NSDAP found itself in a difficult situation: Hitler himself opposed the revolutionary path or the coup d'état. But the chancellor of Austria prevented the legal path of coming to power. He did not want to see a strong Nazi faction in parliament. The NSDAP had only one way left - the struggle against the "corporate Christian-social state" of Dollfuss. He envisioned an armed war against the Heimwehr hostile to Hitler. At the same time, it was planned to carry out an ideological

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Law enforcement forces evacuate the victims of the July attacks in Vienna

Walter Freemer

Austrian Chancellor E. Dollfuss

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At first, Otto Strasser wanted to make the shoe, the emblem of the secret peasant societies of the early 17th century, the symbol of his organization, but then settled on the crossed sword and hammer

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Hermann Goering. One

of the main opponents of Gregor Strasser

Heinrich Himmler, first associate of Gregor Strasser,

and then his executioner

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Hitler on the eve of coming to power

Hitler on the eve of coming to power

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Hotel "Zahori", from where the "black radio station" created by Formis was broadcasting

f m @# Otto Strasser at the grave of Rudolf Formis in Prague

“After Hitler, the Black Front will come” - a propaganda sticker by supporters of O. Strasser

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Nashe Vremya magazine, which published Otto Strasser's last legal article in Germany

Anti-fascist pamphlet "Our Struggle Against the Third Reich" by Otto Strasser

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the bottom of these unions. The NSDAP hoped that the Highwehrs would adopt National Socialist ideals and that the military base of the Dollfuss regime would be weakened.

And although Strasser characterized Dollfuss as a defender of the fascist order, he very soon turned in the publications of the "Commonwealth of Arms" into "the only man of action" who could stop the NSDAP. Incidentally, the first characterization was not a political exaggeration. Dollfuss was indeed guided by Mussolini, borrowing some of his ideas for his own Austrian corporate state.

But Strasser could not abandon the principles of creating a "Greater Germany", integrating all German minorities and reuniting with the "Austrian brothers". Moreover, he did not imagine that he would ever have to operate in this southern country. The success of the NSDAP in Austria and Czechoslovakia made Strasser think. In the early days of Hitler's coming to power in the "Commonwealth of Arms" they still believed in the speedy fall of this "Girondist" and the advent of the "Jacobin socialist government". But the fact that millions of Germans throughout Europe supported the Führer could backfire on the young socialist state.

In these countries, primarily in Austria and the Sudetenland, it was necessary to "bring the ferments of revolutionary National Socialism" and build an organization that would not only recruit personnel for the revolution, but also strive to participate in local political actions. In 1932, Strasser became more active in establishing contacts with political circles in Austria. For this he used Franz

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Hager and Carl Ecker. The latter in the past was the head of the paramilitary group "German Defense". This gave Strasser a chance to "spud" the Austrian "Völkisch" militaristic groups, spreading the ideas of revolutionary National Socialism there. |

In order not to get lost in the intricacies of Austrian politics, let's go back a few years. After the World War, in Austria, as in Germany, paramilitary groups sprang up everywhere. They could be conditionally divided into detachments of patriotic protective militia (Haymwehr) and anti-Bolshevik "defense groups". In 1923, most of these groupings, following the example of Ludendorff, merged into the German Military Sports Union. The same Ludendorff was elected chairman of this union in 1925. But over time, the organization split. In 1927, the Union "German Defense" was created, which was able to unite most of the paramilitarist groups. The ideological principles of the "German Defense" basically repeated the themes of the German "Völkisch" groups: national solidarity, the rejection of the social revolution, the refusal to recognize the existence of the Austrian nation, the proclamation of the need for the Anschluss of Austria, the struggle against the Treaty of Versailles. In October 1927, the composition of the "German Defense" left the "Union for the Defense of the Motherland". The reason for this was the pro-Italian fascist sentiment that prevailed in the highwehrs. The Heimwehrites were not only against the Anschluss, but were ready to get closer to the Mussolini-oriented Christian socialists. As a result, the remainder

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The "German defense" preferred to get closer to the NSDAP. By 1931, two trends emerged in the German Defense League. One wing preferred to adopt the ideology and practice of the Nazis. Another, weaker one, was oriented towards conservative revolutionary circles. They even started talking about the German socialist revolution. But back to Otto Strasser.

When at the beginning of 1932 the "Combat Commonwealth" managed to cope with another internal crisis, Strasser decided to send a lot of propaganda materials to Vienna and personally get to know his Austrian supporters. This meeting took place at the Third Imperial Congress of the CGRNS. There were only three Austrians at the Congress of Revolutionary National Socialists at that time: Franz Hager, Karl Ecker and Leopold Mayer. This congress was the impetus for the construction of a branch of the "Combat Commonwealth" in Austria, the number of members of which grew simply before our eyes. At the same congress, it was decided to divide the whole of Austria into two zones, which received the code name "Vienna" and "Province". This was supposed to simplify campaigning and the creation of new battle groups.

In the Vienna "combat district" it was necessary to immediately solve two problems: to increase the number of members of the organization and to conduct political studies among them. The first task was completed fairly quickly. The "Combat Commonwealth" was almost completely joined by the "German Defense" and the "Union of German Socialists". But the members of these organizations had no idea what revolutionary National Socialism was. Isn't it interesting

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behavior? People joined the organization without even knowing what ideas they would have to fight for.

Now it became necessary to adapt the ideology of the Black Front to the conditions of the political climate in Austria. In the archives of the Vienna police, there are reports of the meetings of the metropolitan group, which were held under the chairmanship of Karl Ecker. Between October 15, 1932 and January 30, 1933, 13 meetings were held. That is, they were held every week. The meetings were mainly devoted to solving organizational issues and political training. Consider, for example, the meeting of December 27, 1932, a typical example of the activity of the Vienna group.

The event, which lasted from 20.30 to 23.00, was attended by nine people, among whom was a new supporter, who was immediately enlisted as a "comrade-in-arms". The central topic was a 45-minute report on the national liberation struggle, followed by a 15-minute debate. After a short pause, the audience studied the sixth "thesis of the German Revolution" and moved on to solving organizational issues: exchanging contact information, distributing newspapers, planning events for the next week. Usually no more than ten people took part in the meetings. It is noteworthy that those who did not appear at the party meeting were subject to disciplinary action. But, on the other hand, not all members of the "Combat Commonwealth" came to such meetings. The leadership invited the most capable to prepare cadres for the future mass movement. The purpose of the training is to instill analytical and oratory skills,

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which later could be useful during meetings and discussions. Any member of the "Combat Commonwealth" should have been able to convince his opponent.

The discussion of the "theses of the German Revolution" and various manifestos of the "Black Front" was supposed to provide a basis for argumentation in political disputes.

At that time, the members of the "Combat Commonwealth" behaved like some kind of elite of the underground movement. But they did this by no means because they were subjected to police persecution, but because they were convinced that their small number was nothing more than an expression of revolutionary quality. At first, the Strasser group was ridiculously small, but when they joined it the League of German Socialists joined, the Strasserians numbered about a thousand people. By December 1932, their efforts bore the first fruits - the number of members of the "Combat Commonwealth" began to grow. Most of the new people came from the NSDAP. Franz Hager, who led the "battle group South-East", was even joined by several eminent Austrian Nazis. It was about the agitator Pokorny, the former stormtrooper Panemann, the head of the propaganda department, Scheier, and the treasurer of Gau Vienna, Walter Turek. Walter Turek was such a well-known figure in metropolitan circles that his withdrawal from the NSDAP immediately became a sensation. In addition, he did not limit himself to the fact that he left the Nazi party. Turek published his own manifesto, in which he smashed the bureaucracy of the NSDAP, the swagger of party bosses who shamelessly spent public money, to smithereens. At the end of 1932, Strasser succeeded in creating

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points in Innsbruck, Salzburg and Graz. At the same time, the Combat Commonwealth, through the mediation of Rudolf Kinsky, established contacts with Schultz.

Rudolf Kinsky was born in 1899. As the son of the director of the federal chancellery, he traveled around Europe for a long time after the war. He came into politics in 1926, when he published analytical articles on the revival of Western Europe in the journal Kultura. In 1930 he defended his dissertation and began to collaborate with Arthur Maraun's Young German Order. At the same time, he was the editor of the newspaper Novostroika Austria. In 1931, he began studying corporate ideology and joined the NSDAP. There he became acquainted with the articles of Gregor Strasser, which prompted Kinsky to study the writings of Otto Strasser, who convinced him of Hitler's reformism and the need to follow the original ideas of National Socialist solidarity. In 1932, Kinsky became a member of the Combat Commonwealth.

Schultz and his supporters in 1932 joined the Heimwehr under Dollfuss. As a result, they had to participate in skirmishes with the NSDAP. And although Strasser was very critical of the "fascist ideology of Dollfuss", he put the fight against Hitler in the first place. Now the leader of the Black Front was interested in cooperation with the German National Socialist Labor Party. But in relations with Schultz, he preferred to maintain a position of strength. By this time, Schultz's party had lost most of its supporters. She wasn't even able to regu

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Brilliantly publish a newspaper that has turned into a 4-page leaflet. To survive, Schultz had to find an ally. Strasser, on the other hand, could not only provide him with financial assistance, but also significantly increase the prestige of the DNSAP, giving it the status of a nationwide movement. For Strasser, an alliance with Schultz meant control over the Austrian newspaper and the application of the principles of the Black Front in practice. But above all, it was an opportunity to wage political struggle through the traditions of Austrian National Socialism. In addition, cooperation with Schultz became a "protection letter" from the Dollfuss government, which at any moment could start persecuting the Strasserians. Contrary to Strasser's expectations, Schultz's reaction was more than restrained. Officially long-awaited union

was concluded only in February 1933, when it became known about the ban on the Black Front in Germany.

In 1933, the "Combat Commonwealth" operating in Austria experienced its first crisis. The energy with which Carl Ecker carried out propaganda activities led to a clash with some of the "old" members of the "Commonwealth", primarily with Franz Hager. The latter could not come to terms with the fact that he did not become the chairman of the Austrian "Combat Commonwealth", and from October 1932 he began to pursue his own political line, with special emphasis on agriculture. He demanded that he be granted independence from the Viennese leadership, since Hager at the local level was going to unite with the village unions. Ecker, of course, could not agree to this.

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Until January 1933, the executive committee of the KGRNS preferred not to interfere in these "provincial squabbles." The end of the conflict might have been put in place by the election of a new Vienna bureau. But in fact, after that, the conflict flared up with even greater force. Hager refused to dissolve his local offices. By order from Berlin, the situation, which threatened to split, was to be settled on February 8, 1933, at the negotiations, which were to be held in the Schedel cafe. There, Ecker declared that he was empowered to disband the "battle group in Vienna" and remove Hager from all posts. He could remain in the organization only on one condition: he must stop any contacts with other political unions and organizations. Hager decided to accept this offer: he resigned the leadership of the "Province" zone, which became directly subordinate to Vienna.

In order to finally consolidate the agreement reached, it was decided to hold a general meeting, which was to be attended by Kübler, specially invited for this occasion. After he read out the greeting from the "leader", he reported even more shocking news - the Austrian branch of the "Combat Commonwealth" was subject to reorganization. Now the battle group "Southern March" was operating throughout Austria, which was to be led by Karl Ecker. It became obvious: the Berlin leadership wanted to gain complete control over the Austrians, putting an end to any aspirations for autonomy. (Isn't this what Otto Strasser reproached Hitler for?) The Hagers actually survived from the organization. February 16, 1933

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came from the "Combat Commonwealth". But before that, on behalf of his supporters, he published an open letter: "Peace to the huts, boyma to the palaces! Good luck, friends! We inform you that we, the Austrian branch of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists", are leaving this organization in order to fight with all our might for a socialist revolution, which would mean an improvement in the German fate. Our legal organizational form is the Radical Socialist National Association. Our program is the 20 Principles of the German National Communists. Our greeting is Heil Germany!"

Hager's letter did not actually criticize Strasser and his organization, and therefore they decided to simply turn a blind eye to this trouble. But following Hager, the KGRNS left most of the members of his "fighting group". However, almost all of them returned to the "Combat Commonwealth" a little later. This time, the split in the organization was not caused by political reasons at all, but by personal rivalry between two people who dreamed of heading the Austrian branch of the "Combat Commonwealth". This incident had virtually no effect on the further activities of the Strasserians. Ecker managed to create a youth group "Black Youth". The vast majority of its members were young members of the German Defense, who, if desired, together with the Heimwehr, could organize a rebuff to the Nazi stormtroopers.

The Austrian "fighting group" acquired exceptional importance after the ban on the "Black Front" in Germany. Now she has become responsible for coordinating

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dynamism of the activity of the entire Strasserian movement. The need to publish their own press, which was supposed to be supplied illegally to the Reich, allowed Strasser and Schultz to agree on the start of joint activities. But at the same time, there could be no question of unification. Schultz was in a better position. At least he was not persecuted in his homeland. CIRNS and DNSAP remained two different organizations. At the same time, Schultz emphasized that he did not see any ideological differences between their groups. But it was more of a gesture of goodwill.

The information service of the NSDAP reported the following in one of the reports about this agreement: "As already mentioned in the 6th message of February 19, 1933, Otto Strasser is going to use the services of the newspaper "German Workers' Press", which should take the place of the banned newspaper "Black Front. The Executive Committee, which met on February 17, 1933 in Thuringia, approved this project.

The German Workers' Press, published on February 25, 1933, published an appeal confirming the agreement reached. "We inform you that after the ban on the Black Front, the German Workers' Press will be published as the print organ of the Otto Strasser movement, the Black Front led by him, and will publish organizational messages and articles sent from Germany. We also inform you that an agreement has been reached on the part of the Austrian DNSAP with the "Commonwealth" of Otto Strasser on his arrival in Vienna for a policy statement that should predetermine the paths of both movements.

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The alliance between Schultz and Strasser proved to be short-lived, lasting until March 20, 1933. Strasser provided financial support to Schultz so that he would pay more attention to publishing. Prior to this collaboration, the German Workers' Press had a print run of 2,500 copies, of which 1,400 went to retailers, 600 to subscribers, and 500 went to Germany. At the end of February, Strasser demanded that the circulation be increased to 5,000, most of which were to be sent to Germany. On March 4, the German Workers' Press first came out with an insert for the first issue of Strasser's Black Sender. On March 7, Schultz gathered a general gathering of the Vienna group at the Green Gate Hotel. Schultz himself and his assistant Enderes spoke from the DNSAP at this event. Kinski, Bonesh and Gergely spoke from the "Combat Commonwealth". The topic of discussion was "Our position towards Hitler and the Social Democracy". After reading the reports, one got the impression that the socialism of one grouping did not at all resemble the socialism of the other. And no one even tried to find common ground.

Why the German Workers' Press stopped publishing is still unknown. But the fact remains that the second issue of The Black Sender was published elsewhere as an independent newspaper. The third issue was again published as a supplement to the German Workers' Press. It finally attempted to develop a common understanding of socialism. Kinski wrote the article "What is socialism? Four principles

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principles of German socialism. But the proposed principles were very different from Strasser's.
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According to Kinsky, the crisis of capitalism was not connected with a cyclical historical crisis, a predetermined transition from liberalism to conservatism. For him, this phenomenon was a mere coincidence of two economic processes: the crises of production and distribution. The absence of a planned economy, the pursuit of profit led to overproduction, imbalance, which resulted in a global economic crisis. As a result, it was undermined

the purchasing power of the broad strata of the people. The solution to the problem proposed by Kinski was to train a part of the urban population in rural professions and to carry out an action of resettlement to the eastern territories. This was to free 80% of the people from the chains of debt slavery. Raising the standard of living was linked to the recognition of the public interest.

The redistribution of personal property meant state control over financial and industrial capital, the exclusion of non-German elements from economic life. Voluntary restriction of needs and incomes should have led to the complete autarchy of the country. But neither the corporate state of Italian fascism nor the state of estates and councils proclaimed by Strasser could, according to Kinsky, become the basis for a new social order. Rejecting the early positions of the early National Socialists, Kinsky put forward the idea of an omnipresent state that could realize the universal dream of the public good.

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He seemed to be convinced that education alone was enough to build a just society and a correct economic order. Later these ideas were developed by the "German National Socialist Association of Austria".

Despite all attempts at rapprochement, on March 20, 1933, a break occurred between Schultz and Strasser. The true reasons for it are unknown, but the following hypothesis seems plausible. Strasser was obsessed with only one idea - to fight against Hitler. But this could hardly satisfy the organization, which played a role, albeit a small one, but still in Austrian politics. And if Schulz's political interests were limited to his homeland, then Strasser focused primarily on Germany. And so, their interests not only did not coincide, but were mutually exclusive. Differences of opinion exacerbated financial difficulties. Strasser could not support Schultz for a long time - all German accounts of the Black Front were arrested. And it was more profitable for Strasser himself to provide funding for his own newspaper.

From March to July 1933, Strasser independently published in Vienna 15 issues of The Black Sender, which, although it had four pages, was issued in a circulation of five thousand. The new printed organ of the Strasserians was essentially a battle sheet. In addition, Strasser managed to publish the pamphlet "Will Hitler last", which was illegally delivered to Germany, however, delivery by mail, as was done before, had to be stopped. It was decided to create a network of illegal immigrants on the Austrian-Bavarian border, who would deliver clandestine goods to the Reich.

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March 18 "The black recipient appeared in the newsstands of Vienna — the Combat Commonwealth launched a broad subscription campaign. Oddly enough, she succeeded. Numerous organizations have subscribed to the newspaper besides individuals. Among them were not only nationalist organizations, but also the editorial office of the Marxist Red Banner, and even the reading rooms of the University of Vienna. This allowed Strasser to spread his views among the majority of conservative organizations in the Austrian capital and even to create a circle of sympathizers, which included many students. But all the same, the position of the "Combat Commonwealth" in March 1933 was unenviable. There was only enough money to publish a newspaper.

In April 1933, Hildebrand arrived from Germany to supervise the activities of the Austrian Strasserians. In addition to him, two full-time employees were involved in the management: Hana Heiden and Emil Karl Müller. Karl Ecker was exclusively recruiting new supporters. He succeeded in this, although it was impossible to say that the organization grew by leaps and bounds. In Vienna, Strasser could count on about 200 people. Very difficult to install

who they were. On the whole, however, it can be asserted that in Austria the Combat Commonwealth has become an organization of the middle strata, and not at all a workers' union. Most of the Austrian Strassers were white collar workers.

Random remarks by supporters of the Schultz group and ex-Austrian Nazis who left the party spoke of frequent dual membership in the Combat Commonwealth and other organizations: the German Defense, the Tannenberg Union, which carried out

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its activities not only in Germany, but also in Austria. All this suggests that Strasser's organization developed here as a kind of attachment to paramilitary associations of a nationalist persuasion. Probably, the Strasserians themselves managed to lure few people into their ranks. The organizational ability of the Austrian Strasserians can be called into question, especially if one takes into account the negotiations with the "German Defense" and the internal letters circulated on July 1, 1933. The Combat Commonwealth had long been trying to establish closer contacts with the German Defense, especially since many of its members were already Strasserians. At the direction of the national leadership of the "German Defense", a certain captain Kade took part in all the activities of the "Combat Commonwealth". Apparently, he studied the potential of this movement. At a certain point, most likely after Kade's report, the German Defense expressed its readiness to participate in the activities of the Strasserians and distribute among its members the propaganda materials of the "Commonwealth of Fighting". But this had to happen under a number of conditions. First, the Strasserians needed to prove themselves on the positive side. Secondly, the "Combat Commonwealth" should have taken a clear ideological position. The leadership of the "German Defense" criticized Strasser for his tolerant attitude towards Jews and Christians, the weak politicization of individual members of his organization and insufficiently planned political work (they would have looked at Shtennes' stormtroopers). These remarks were entirely justified, since the new members

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The KGRNS were not able to master the "Theses of the German Revolution", and the old ones did not show much zeal. As a result, the Strasserians often missed compulsory classes, and the events themselves were in disarray.

Plus, the "Combat Commonwealth" was in a difficult situation. It could not stand in opposition to Dollfuss, since overnight all the German Strasserians could lose their political asylum. But it was difficult to attract new supporters by criticizing the head of a foreign state. Attacking the Austrian Nazis was also unreasonable - they could have joined the ranks of the "Combat Commonwealth". As a result, Strasser almost always refused to participate in open political discussions. Indeed, Strasser's theory itself was not very suitable for the Vienna climate. Austrian nationalists considered it incomplete and condemned it for being vague. All this led to a loss of discipline, which was pointed out in an internal letter by the head of the Vienna "battle group" Rudolf Jordan. He attacked the wards with derogatory criticism for unpaid dues, unwillingness to undergo political studies, neglect of contacts with Germany, failure to follow orders: ". For these meetings of talkers, the name "political drink" or "association of exorcists" would be more suitable. For those who do not clearly understand why they came here, who, because of the secondary, do not see the main thing, there is no place for 6 "Combat Commonwealth". We need business, not pain

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tonya. I am aware of the severity of the tasks I have set, but they must be fulfilled. We must prove to ourselves and to history whether we are the Jacobins of the German Revolution or the miserable Girondins! Maybe we are revolutionaries over a beer mug and ordinary grumblers? We must be activists, fighters for the cause of the German Revolution. We must fight, not engage in political masturbation! We need not quantity, but quality. We have to achieve a great goal — the Great National Socialist Germany!"

While quite a lot is known about the propaganda and agitation activities of the "Combat Commonwealth" in the Vienna period, much less was reported about Otto Strasser's move to Austria. According to Strasser's memoirs, his older brother Gregor helped him to get to Austria, who retired from politics and waited for his fate. In one of his autobiographies, Otto Strasser reported that he arrived in Vienna on May 9, 1933 without any police registration, settled with his cousin Louise Rapp.

But the first inaccuracies in Strasser's memoirs came to light when a statement he had filed with the Vienna police was found. However, these are details. At that time, he was very afraid of the attacks of the Austrian Nazis, who were in an illegal position. The fears were quite justified. After the "Black Front" was banned in Germany, Dollfuss could succumb to Nazi terror and free the hands of the Nazis, who would themselves deal with old opponents.

Strasser was completely convinced of the reality

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similar scenario, and therefore already in May 1933 he was going to move to a safe place, and the organization itself to be relocated to Czechoslovakia. However, his memoirs should not be particularly trusted - Strasser liked to embellish everything. Take Edgar Jung, for example.

Edgar Jung, a well-known political essayist and writer, began his career in the People's Party, after which he joined the German Master's Club, a Young Conservative think tank. In 1932-1934 he was an adviser to Papen, in whom Jung tried to find a law-abiding conservative spirit, which did not prevent the latter from making a compromise with Hitler. Jung, in turn, tried to bring together all more or less oppositional conservatives. He even succeeded in provoking Papen to make a frank speech in Marburg on June 17, 1934, calling for opposition to Hitler. It was planned that the SA, with the support of the radical wing of the Reichswehr, were to raise an uprising and form a national government. But Hitler struck faster. E. Jung died under unclear circumstances on July 1, 1934

of the year.

Well, Strasser, in his memoirs, claimed to be in close contact with Jung. But in fact, it turned out that they hardly knew each other. There is evidence that Jung expressed a desire to meet Strasser in Austria. The meeting took place sometime at the end of May 1933. On it, Jung told Otto Strasser about the growing contradictions within the Hitler cabinet, the differences between the SA and the Reichswehr, the feuds between the stormtroopers and the SS, the differences between the SA and the Steel Helmet, about

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growing Nazi terror. Jung allegedly ended his story with the thought that influential circles will not always look meekly at these outrages. After an exchange of opinions, Jung and his friends expressed their willingness to buy several thousand copies of The Black Receiver and an anti-Hitler pamphlet to send to Germany. In addition, Jung gave Strasser a gift - a fake passport issued in someone's name. He could provide Strasser with

the need for freedom of movement in Germany. The point was that they wanted to involve Strasser in a conservative conspiracy against Hitler.

To strengthen his position in Austria, Strasser decided to establish connections with the most influential figure in the paramilitary groups, Walter Frimer. Walter Frimer was one of the leaders of the Austrian Heimwehr. As you know, it was these paramilitary unions that brought Dollfuss to power. But over time, "social-Christian fascism" as the main ideology of the Heimwehr was supplanted by Great German ideas in the "Völkisch" style. This ideological development allowed them to get closer to the NSDAP, which Gregor Strasser advocated as early as 1930. Frimer became the de facto spokesman for such sentiments. Under his control at that time was a powerful organization "Protection of the Motherland". In September 1931, W. Frimer, following the model of Mussolini, decided to organize a campaign against Vienna. But the putsch failed. First, he was ill-prepared. Secondly, the leaders of the other Heimwehrs reacted with hostility to this idea. Frimer got away with the coup attempt. The government does not want

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it was necessary to aggravate the already difficult political situation in the country, and the conspirators were not even put on trial. Remaining at large, Frimer returned to his native Styrian brand. But his political retreat did not last long. In 1932, he began to cooperate with the Austrian Nazis. In May of the same year, he called on the rank and file members of the Heimwehr for political independence from the national leadership of these unions, which supported the Dollfuss regime. On May 20, he met with Hitler. During the conversation, Frimer insisted on the independence of the "Protection of the Motherland" from the NSDAP. The Fuehrer seemed to have made a concession. In 1933 Frimer's Heimwehr was renamed the German-Austrian Defense of the Motherland. It was reinforced by members of the Oberland, who lived in Tyrol and Carinthia. On April 18, 1933, Frimer, together with the Nazis, creates the Great German Front. It was from this moment that the influence of the Hitlerite movement on the Heimwehr began to grow. Local groups of Nazis began to replenish with Austrian nationalists. Now Frimer was only getting in the way of Hitler. He, with two dozen supporters, was actually thrown out of the Great German Front. From that moment Frimer decided to start an armed struggle against Hitler.

It was then that Otto Strasser and Frimer met. But practically nothing is known about their joint activities. Apparently, the authorities did not take this "political misalliance" seriously. Information could be found only in one of the Austrian newspapers of that time - "Emergency Leaflet". In one of the issues of this newspaper, between the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Social

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sheets" and Frimer's group was given an equal sign, they were called either National Bolsheviks or National Communists.

Chapter 2

LIQUIDATION OF "VIENNA CENTRAL" AND AN ATTEMPT TO WORK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

When, in early 1933, Dollfuss decided to launch an offensive against the NSDAP, the Nazi Party was in real danger of being banned in Austria. The Austrian Nazis decided to respond to these measures with equally aggressive tactics. In January 1933, a wave of terror swept the country. Almost every day there were bomb explosions somewhere. As befits in such a situation, all this was colorfully portrayed in the press. The Nazis blew up Jewish shops, newsstands, police stations. In May-June 1933, a new wave of terror began, which sowed widespread panic. Panic notes were heard even in the police reports that were sent to the Federal Chancellor.

On May 11-15, Vienna experienced three bloody days. The authors of numerous terrorist attacks were unknown, but Dollfuss attributed them to the Nazis. It was noted that the attackers acted very harmoniously and

boldly. The Himwehr and the police began mass arrests of local stormtroopers and pro-Nazi students. At first, they denied involvement in these attacks. But later the NSDAP was forced to

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to know that some of them were involved in "violent actions", without specifying whether they were talking about street clashes or organizing terrorist attacks. Now Dollfuss had a reason to take even tougher measures against the Nazi party. On June 20, 1933, all Austrian newspapers reported that the NSDAP and the Styrian Defense of the Motherland were banned in Austria. This ban was based on the law of June 24, 1917, which was supposed to protect the republic from social unrest. The NSDAP prohibited any activity on the territory of Austria, including the creation of new organizations. It was also forbidden to wear Nazi badges and symbols. Those who violated the ban were fined 2,000 shillings and imprisoned for six months. As the events of February-June 1934 showed, these measures were ineffective, they did not neutralize the Nazi danger. Hitler's SA and SS continued to exist, formally joining paramilitarist organizations, for example, the Oberland Union. The government decided to ban the Oberland and the German Defense, but this also did not bring results.

In the meantime, the German newspapers claimed that the wave of terror in Austria was organized by the Black Front, and the SA and radical students simply incriminated themselves under torture. Strasser immediately reacted to this slander. He contacted the Himwehr and published a statement in the newspapers strongly denying such accusations. But the situation continued to evolve.

On Monday, June 26, 1933, an article appeared in the newspaper Combat Appeal, again accusing

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Strasser in organizing riots. A few days later, the same newspaper launched a smear campaign against the Black Front by publishing the article "The bombers were not Nazis." The Battle Call made it clear that these publications were to be a sensational twist in the case of the mysterious attacks. In her opinion, while the NSDAP had an official status, there was no sabotage and assassination attempts in the country, since the Nazis already had the opportunity to conduct propaganda activities. While the political leadership of the Austrian NSDAP could directly influence its supporters, it did not turn to paramilitaries for help. As long as there were disciplined meetings, demonstrations, meetings of the SA and SS, the youth could realize their thirst for activity and there were no casualties.

It turns out, according to the "Combat Appeal", already in the autumn of 1932, the emissaries of the "Black Front" began to exert a secret influence on the domestic policy of Austria. They tried to demoralize the Nazis by infiltrating the NSDAP, the SS and the SA. The newspaper claimed that some units of the Austrian SS consisted entirely of Strasserians. "Provocateurs" even allegedly extended their tentacles to Rabochaya Gazeta and Krasnoye Znamya. The "Black Front" actually occupied the Nazi organizations, imbuing their members with "National Bolshevik" ideas.

Further more. In Germany, the Black Front, it turns out, wanted to dissuade Hitler from the legal path, suggesting that he seize power by illegal means. The Strasserians themselves adhered to "propaganda by deed". "In the minds of these marauders

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Bolshevik and anarchist ideas sprang from the National Socialist movement," stated one of the articles. "Hitler could not put up with such a policy of catastrophes, and therefore delivered his party from Otto Strasser, Walter Stennes and the like. But since the Strasserians did not stop underground work, Hitler was forced to send them to 6 concentration camps. Then Strasser and Stennes decided to hide in 6 Vienna in order to establish relations there with the remnants of the Schulz group, hoping to infiltrate the 6 "Fatherland Front" [the ruling party in Austria during the years of the Dollfuss regime]. ∴

After a "thorough investigation", the author of the article came to the conclusion that the political leadership of the NSDAP had nothing to do with the terrorist acts in Austria. Meanwhile, a certain "underground front" already existed in the country, which set as its goal the destruction not only of National Socialism, but of fascism in general. These articles, in their form and content, were a typical manifestation of Nazi propaganda: everything turned upside down, white became black. On the one hand, the Nazi leadership, which inspired these publications, tried to put pressure on Dollfuss, hinting that riots and terrorist attacks might continue. On the other hand, it tried to discredit Otto Strasser in the eyes of the Heimwehr, presenting him as a communist and the most dangerous enemy of Austrian fascism.

In one of his books, Strasser suggested that at that time there were people behind the police prefect of Vienna who were Nazi sympathizers:

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"Now everything was clear: the vile Steinhäusel [prefect of police] had planned this story. I seethed with rage when I imagined how he receives a double reward: from the Austrian government for destroying the terrorists, and from Berlin for damaging the Black Front central. It is obvious that these articles, which attracted public attention, were the work of the NSDAP. The Nazis wanted to make me a scapegoat."

The publications that appeared in the War Appeal were Hitler's obvious hint to Dollfuss: the Austrian government should lift the ban on the activities of the Nazi Party and start prosecuting the Strasserians as the "true" perpetrators of the attacks.

When the smear campaign against Otto Strasser and the Black Front reached its peak, the engineer Anton Weber came to the attention of the Austrian police. Weber was a Bavarian, one of the participants in the illegal network created by Strasser, which smuggled underground literature into Germany. He was arrested on June 18, 1933 while trying to hide leaflets intended for anti-fascist groups on one of the ships. On June 30, Weber appeared before a Vienna court, and some time later, the police began rounding up members of the Strasser organization. The slanderous campaign in the press and the smuggling turned out to be sufficient reason for the Austrian officials to start a police investigation. After all the members of the "Black Front" and their meeting places were identified, the police began to prepare searches. Arrests began on July 3, 1933.

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At about 1 pm, reinforced police detachments occupied the premises of the Vienna Bureau of the Black Front in the Hofburg. Then searches began at the strongholds and the headquarters of the National Union of Non-Commissioned Officers. As follows from the police reports, the people who had gathered there did not expect the raid, and therefore did not have time to hide their weapons and destroy documents. Some of the Strasserians present barricaded themselves in one of the rooms. But it was taken by storm before they had time to destroy the file cabinet of the Black Front. The police seized the archives of the movement, two pistols, several clips for them and a dozen rifle bayonets. During the search, the police came across several important documents: Hildebrand's correspondence with the German comrades, the addresses of members of the Black Front, and information about subscribers to the Strasserian newspapers.

Searches in the strongholds, at Rudolf Jordan's and in the premises of the "National Union of Non-Commissioned Officers" turned out to be fruitless. But in one of the apartments, several boxes with underground literature and cartridges were found. The arrests continued the next day. Karl Ecker, Alfred Kress, Louise Konrad were arrested, who had lists of the organization and written reports on the activities of the revolutionary National Socialists in Germany and Austria. On July 5, Artur Wolf, Wilhelm Landung, Eduard Svoboda, Oswald Hrish, Wilhelm Görgey and Johann Seyfried were captured, but nothing special was found on them, except for the usual newspaper publications.

Despite the fact that the police department absolutely did not believe that the Otto Strass organization

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Sulfur was involved in the terrorist attacks committed in June 1933, the police nevertheless handed over 17 members of the Black Front to justice. The court, taking into account the illegal possession of weapons and the illegal situation of the "Black Front" in Austria, decided to leave Otto Strasser's associates in prison. All of them were convicted of creating a secret organization and possession of weapons. Strasser was sentenced to prison in absentia. All convicts were released after a year. And some, such as Louise Conrad, spent only a couple of months in prison. At the same time, the court prohibited the re-creation of the Black Front in any form. Although in itself such a fact was unlikely - the rank and file members finally lost any contact with their leadership. Another setback awaited Strasser - his supporters were persecuted in Austria as well as in Germany.

In all his books, Strasser claimed that he was in Vienna during the arrests of his comrades-in-arms, and it was only by a miracle that he managed not to fall into the hands of the police. He described his flight to Czechoslovakia as follows: "It was not safe to leave Austria by rail. As experience showed, 6 railway stations and roads were already closely monitored. But there was still an old tram between Vienna and Presburg ... The police condescendingly looked at such an old-fashioned vehicle as a tram. No one could have thought that I would hide in Czechoslovakia in this way.

One can question the plausibility of such colorful descriptions, since it is known that during his stay in Austria, Otto Strass

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ser was under the relentless control of the police. They continued to follow him even during his stay in the provincial town of Mallnitz. Although Strasser traveled around the country under the name of the engineer Otto Lerbrock, he never managed to elude the police. On June 12, a police report stated that, having left his wife in Mallnitz, he had gone to live with his cousin in Vienna. On June 18, he departs by train from Franz Josef Station to Czechoslovakia. It was there that he learned about the arrests that took place on July 3, 1933. These facts make one doubt that a "miracle" really happened in Vienna. The rest could be learned from his letter sent by Strasser on July 6, 1933 from Prague to the Vienna police.

This text consisted of two parts. The first characterized the actions of the police, the second contained explanations regarding the goals and objectives of the Black Front. "Publications in the Viennese press, in particular the report of the police on July 5 regarding the Black Front, gave me, as the imperial leader of this organization, an occasion to bring our goals to the attention of the police structures. As rightly noted in the police release, I did not stay long in Abstrtia. But 6 unlike the above, he notified the police of the arrival of 6 the country ... The "Black Front" sought an uncompromising and revolutionary embodiment 6 of the life of the ideas of National Socialism. Similar target settings were opposed and continue to be opposed to each other by "Cher-

front" and the Hitlerite party. But they will never be able to direct the "Black Front" against the interests of the German people, as well as against

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beguiling concepts of humanity and kindness. Despite some political disagreements that have arisen between us and the Austrian government, we believe that the Vienna police are obliged to expose the lies of the Nazi newspapers and to establish that the Black Front was not involved in the committed terrorist attacks. But why, despite their innocence, were the Black Front supporters arrested and put on trial? Allegedly for the creation of a secret organization? But the accusation of a conspiracy is absurd, since the activities of the "Black Front" took place under the self-evident supervision of the authorities. During the issuance of the bulletin of the imperial leadership ("The Black Sender"), which was banned in Germany, we, following the instructions, coordinated each issue in order to bring it to the public as soon as possible. None of the 15 issues of this newspaper was arrested and seized by the police. And in other political activities, the Black Front never went beyond the limits established by the laws of Austria, since we did not want to endanger our political asylum. Therefore, we are talking about either a regrettable blunder or a fatal mistake." The letter ended with three requests: to release Louise Conrad, who was not involved in political activities; not to extradite the Strasserians arrested in Austria to Germany; rehabilitate all members of the Black Front and preserve their right of political asylum. An answer to this letter was to be received by Anton Strasser, who emigrated to France in January 1933. The appeal itself to the Austrian authorities was published in full in the 16th issue of The Black Sender. Not a single German or Austrian newspaper dared to publish it. Yes and

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the name of Otto Strasser very soon disappeared from the pages of the Austrian newspapers, only the German consulate continued to be interested in him. On June 13, 1933, the Viennese police received a letter from German diplomats in which they asked for the arrested members of the Black Front to be extradited to Germany. The solution of the issue stalled. A long correspondence ensued. The Austrian government could not decide whether the refusal to extradite the convicted Strasserians would cause international complications. But in the end, the German consulate received a negative answer, the Austrian episode in the history of revolutionary National Socialism came to an end.

The liquidation of the Austrian "central" "Black Front" was a heavy blow to the anti-fascist resistance in Germany. Strasser turned out to be completely unprepared for the creation of a second "central", which was supposed to arise this time in Czechoslovakia. It is very difficult to understand the reasons for another failure of Strasser, since it is not known what motivated Dollfuss when he decided to ban the Black Front in his country. Perhaps the advisers convinced the chancellor that the activities of the revolutionary National Socialists were directed against the government, that the Black Front was fighting against fascism, including its Austrian version, that Strasser intended to carry out a National Bolshevik revolution in Austria. . But most likely the reason lies in the fact that Strasser was poorly informed about the political situation in Austria, and therefore was not ready to work in this country. His ambivalence towards Dollfuss made the authorities suspicious of the Strasserians. In the event of a collision between the Austrians

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German fascists, German Nazis, revolutionary National Socialists would find themselves between two fires.

Strasser made the mistake of not openly supporting the Dollfuss government, and his revolutionary propaganda went too far. Not daring to get rid of his extremist phraseology, Strasser began to be attacked from all sides. Again, as before, he had to blame only himself for all the failures, which once again called into question his abilities as a politician. The history of the "Combat Commonwealth" in Czechoslovakia became the starting point for the disappearance of revolutionary national socialism as such.

The liquidation of the "Viennese Central" unsettled Otto Strasser. He actually did not have time to create a new underground center of anti-fascist resistance in Prague. The activities of the Strasser resistance in Czechoslovakia are limited to 1933-1935, that is, the time when there was at least some opposition to Hitler in Germany. By 1935, Strasser focused exclusively on trying to bring together German anti-fascist groups from South America, the USA, South Africa, and certain European countries. He wanted to create a new international organization that would lead the direct actions of the anti-Hitler opposition.

During his stay in Prague, Otto Strasser was not isolated. About 600 people who fled Germany lived here: communists, social democrats, Jews, liberal intellectuals. From them, several anti-Hitler centers were formed, which were active in publishing.

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ness. But the Czech government was very reserved about such emigration. It supported the liberals and social democrats to a certain extent, taking a hostile stance towards the communists. The German community was under constant police supervision, but was not persecuted until it criticized the existing authorities in the country. At a certain point, the Masaryk government began to provide significant assistance to liberal and democratic groups oriented towards a decisive struggle against the Nazi regime. Masaryk followed with increasing concern the agitation of Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten Nazis. At that time, about 3 million Germans lived in Czechoslovakia, and the country's president was not at all eager to repeat the Austrian scenario.

In Czechoslovakia, Otto Strasser could count on only 10 people - the remnants of the once numerous Black Front. The number is clearly insufficient for effective underground work. Strasser wanted to re-establish ties with supporters who remained in Germany. In 1933-1934, in an attempt to find a sponsor for a new newspaper, he wrote several anti-Hitler pamphlets. With his numerous interviews, Strasser tried to form an opinion among the public that he was the most authoritative figure in the German

opposition.

In articles and discussions with journalists, Strasser did not get tired of repeating his scheme of the Jacobin-Girondist development of history, expressing firm confidence in the speedy fall of the Hitler regime. All the same as was said a few years ago, except that now Strasser was demonstrating his undisguised love for the Jews.

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Such philosemitism awakened in him for political reasons. He really hoped to get financial support from anti-fascist organizations in the United States. It is not surprising that during this period there were a lot of Jews around Strasser: the former Reichswehrte Heimann, the Prague publisher of the North, the Hungarian Jewess Frau Grof, who at one time even worked as the secretary of the "leader" of the Black Front.

In an article written for the Paris Daily, he vehemently attacked the "stupid and unjust anti-Semitic slander spread by the Nazis." He demanded the protection of the Jewish minority, and saw in the Zionist project an opportunity to solve the notorious Jewish question. Active self-promotion allowed Strasser to create a small group, which was called the "Executive Committee of the German Revolution". But Strasser was not going to stop there. He wanted to form a "German government-in-exile" from those close to him.

The program of the "Executive Committee" was aimed at all active anti-fascists, but above all at the German youth. In its content, it was another repetition of the "14 Theses of the German Revolution" — the struggle against the Treaty of Versailles, the denial of capitalism, the socialization of the economy, the people's revolution, the creation of a social system based on estates and professional corporations. Only two points were new: the formal recognition of the equal rights of the Jewish people and the rejection of European wars as a way to create a "European Federation". Any disputes were to be settled only peacefully.

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In order to obtain the necessary funds, the "Executive Committee" decided to issue bonds into circulation, which were to be paid for by the imperial treasury after the revolution. The German consulate immediately protested, since in fact it was not just a scam, but almost the issuance of counterfeit money. The Czech government took note of this remark - Strasser was shaken with a finger and recommended not to do this again.

When, in February 1934, Strasser returned to publishing the German Revolution, he decided that the time had come to intensify internal resistance in Germany itself. This immediately aroused the concern of the Gestapo, who instructed the diplomats to collect any information about Otto Strasser. It was these fragmentary messages that allowed the secret political police of the Third Reich to figure out all of Strasser's connections, his trips and contacts with the Czechoslovak government.

In August 1934, an incident occurred that forced Strasser to adopt a more secretive lifestyle. Gestapo agents, dressed as Czechoslovak policemen, searched his house. From that moment on, Otto Strasser was under the protection of the government of Czechoslovakia. Police Commissioner Benda was responsible for his personal safety. But the help was by no means disinterested. Now Strasser had to contribute to the search and identification of Nazi agents sent to Czechoslovakia. With the consent of Benda, Strasser had three passports and lived in the country under a false name. A police squad was on duty around the clock at his apartment, and in

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accompanied by several bodyguards provided by the Prague authorities.

In February 1934, it seemed that Strasser, thanks to his propaganda skills, was able to find new supporters in France, the Saarland and in Germany itself. But, as follows from the reports of the German consulate, the Prague police doubted the need for increased security measures and personal protection of Otto Strasser. Some local politicians even expressed a desire to expel him from the country. However, Strasser succeeded

to restore the past situation, when the "Society of Czech Philosophy" invited him to make a report "Principles of National Socialism". This lecture was attended by 450 people. The report itself was received very positively by the political circles of Czechoslovakia. Strasser was once again perceived as a serious political thinker who, due to circumstances alone, failed to form a "German government in exile".

The "Night of the Long Knives", during which Gregor Strasser, General Schleicher, and most of the leaders of the opposition stormtroopers were brutally murdered, pushed Otto to become more active. He specifically wrote a pamphlet on this occasion. In it, he exposed the aggressive plans of Hitler. The information provided by Strasser in The German St. Bartholomew's Night was so accurate that one suspects that he did not have his own sources in the SS and the Gestapo. How, for example, could he know about the number of people killed during the "night of long knives", when the official German press reported completely different, lower figures?

Meanwhile, an amnesty was held in Austria, and that was all.

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the arrested Strasserians were released. Most of them preferred to immediately move to Prague. Among them was Hildebrand. Almost immediately, a conflict broke out between him and Strasser. Hildebrand refused to see Hitler as a traitor to German interests. On November 7, he moved to Zurich, from where he sent a letter to Otto Strasser, in which he accused him of betraying national ideals, and assessed the activities of the Black Front as "high treason." After that, Hildebrand began to establish contacts with the Gestapo. This not only allowed him to return to Germany, but also to receive forgiveness from the Nazis. It is possible that Hildebrand's decision was prompted by the successful actions of the Gestapo to eliminate the leaders of the "Black Front" who had fled abroad. Most of the Strasserians who survived the wars were convinced that Hildebrand had begun collaborating with the Gestapo as early as February 1933. But the archives tell a different story. Hildebrand became disillusioned with Strasser when he abandoned his comrades to their fate in Vienna. He began to cooperate with the Gestapo when he learned that Otto Strasser had radically changed his position on the Jewish question.

Another attempt to activate the "Black Front" followed in November 1934, when Strasser established secret contacts with the Swedish crown prince. Their meeting took place in Prague, at the home of a well-known Jewish family. At the same time, he managed to win over the former Chancellor of the Weimar Republic, Brüning, to his side. These two events actually saved Strasser from being deported from the country. Czech government decide

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to use it to fight Hitler. At least he was not hindered in the case with the so-called "black radio station".

This underground radio station was installed in November 1934 by the former editor of the Stuttgart radio, the ardent anti-fascist Rudolf Formis. He used his official position to disrupt the broadcast of Hitler's speeches. As a rule, he cut the wires. Over time, the Gestapo figured out the pest. Formis was thrown into a concentration camp, from which he managed to escape. Otto Strasser was well aware that it was risky to spread the German Revolution in Germany. This could endanger the anti-fascists who remained in Germany. Strasser and Formis decided to use the radio station to broadcast propaganda into the Third Reich. To do this, Formis secretly returned to Stuttgart, where he purchased all the necessary radio components. He managed to collect one. strong and perfect radio station, that it aroused the admiration of the Czechoslovak police. After the war, it was even put on display at the Prague Postal Museum.

The station itself was decided to be located on the Czech-German border. She broadcast music daily. During the breaks between songs, statements by the Black Front and speeches by Otto Strasser, reviews of the anti-fascist press were broadcast. Formis himself

was a talented debater. In the broadcasts, he brilliantly, with malicious irony, denounced the Nazi regime. His audience grew so rapidly that the German consul found nothing better than to complain about Formis Czechoslo himself.

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Wacky Foreign Minister Croft. Naturally, there was no reaction. Then the Gestapo decided to act.

The Third Reich has long been developing a plan to eliminate the "black radio station". On the night of January 23-24, 1935, a special SS team penetrated the territory of Czechoslovakia and raided the hotel from which Formis was broadcasting. He managed to fire several shots before he was killed.

The death of Formis was a severe blow to the Black Front. Most of Strasser's supporters panicked. Someone chose to hide, and someone, like Hildebrand, went over to Hitler's side. Strasser himself ended up in prison, it was the only place where the Czechoslovak government could guarantee his safety. Some time later, he was released. Without money, without associates, without a newspaper or a radio station, without any property, surrounded on all sides by Gestapo agents, he was a man without a future. Formis's burial in the Prague cemetery was not only the funeral of an outstanding anti-fascist, but also the funeral of revolutionary National Socialism. On paper, the Black Front existed until 1945; in fact, it ceased to exist in January 1935. Revolutionary National Socialism did not resurrect during the Second World War, much less after it ended, when the concepts of "National Socialism" and "Hitlerism" became words

synonyms.

Afterword 20 YEARS FLIGHT

After his release from prison, Otto Strasser's position was more than precarious. He could in l>-bout the moment to be deported from the country. 1937 brought another disappointing news - the former President of Czechoslovakia, Masaryk, died. It was thanks to him that Strasser was able to continue his activities in this country. Then followed the Anschluss of Austria, and Strasser lost a few more associates. He followed the Munich Agreement with horror when the Western powers chose to hand over Czechoslovakia to Hitler. Strasser left the country literally on the eve of its occupation. In the autumn of 1938, he went to Paris, tried to create another central, but to no avail. Of all the alleged international anti-fascist organization, he could rely only on Richard Schapke, who was hiding in Denmark.

In France, however, he did not stay long. In December 1938, the Foreign Minister of the Third Reich, Joachim Ribbentrop, arrived in Paris. France was going to sign "perpetual peace" with Hitler, which did not last even a year. During the visit, Ribbentrop demanded the extradition of Otto Strasser. The French government immediately arrested an inconvenient emigrant who could spoil relations with my

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densest neighbour. His fate would have been sealed if the Spanish ambassador had not intervened. Strasser was released but denied political asylum. He decided not to tempt fate and moved to Switzerland, where he settled in the small village of Herrliberg. The place was not chosen by chance, the village was located near the German border, so the Third Reich was within easy reach. He tried to continue his anti-Hitler activities, but every day he succeeded worse and worse.

When World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, Otto Strasser was cornered—not France, now formally at war with Hitler; neither England wanted to grant

political asylum. Like an animal being chased, he found himself trapped in a small European country that was literally swarming with Nazi spies. Another unpleasant surprise awaited Strasser. On November 9, 1939, the former communist Georg Elser detonated a homemade bomb in the famous Munich pub where Hitler was speaking on the occasion of the anniversary of the failed 1923 "beer putsch". During the explosion, eight Nazis were killed, more than sixty people were seriously injured. But the goal of the assassination was not achieved: Hitler finished his speech earlier than usual and left a few minutes before the explosion. Moreover, by a strange coincidence, the Gestapo figured out after a few hours that the "organizer" of the assassination attempt was the Black Front. True, Otto Strasser himself did not know anything about this.

However, the accusations were not so groundless.

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nym. One of the notable actions of the Black Front was an assassination attempt on Hitler in 1936. Strasser persuaded Helmut Hirsch, a Jewish student who had emigrated to Prague from Stuttgart, to return to his homeland and try to kill one of the Nazi leaders. Hirsch wanted to avenge the growing persecution of German Jews. In addition to Hitler, he wanted to settle accounts with the rabid anti-Semite Julius Streicher, a man close to the Fuhrer, the editor of the infamous *Stürmer*. The explosion was supposed to happen in Nuremberg during the next party congress. But Hirsch did not even have time to get explosives - he was betrayed by one of the participants in the conspiracy and captured by the Gestapo. The court sentenced him to death, the execution took place on July 4, 1937 in the Berlin Plötzensee prison, where the lives of many fighters against Nazi Germany ended.

mode. This time, the Nazis decided not to let go of the old enemy - they demanded to extradite Germany

the "organizer" of the assassination, which, of course, was Otto Strasser. The Swiss authorities did not want to spoil relations with the Reich because of some opposition politician and immediately preferred to expel him from the country as an English agent.

In a hurry, I had to flee again to France. And here is Paris again. Here he spent the beginning of 1940, foreseeing the speedy collapse of this country as well. And again an unpleasant surprise. The French government decided to arrest Strasser and place him in the Buffalo concentration camp. The reason for this was his political views - the French government decided to throw him behind bars, so

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how Strasser was a "German National Socialist"! In Germany, he was expected to die as an anti-fascist, Western countries considered him a Nazi - the situation is more than paradoxical. However, Strasser himself believed that his arrest had been inspired by some police officer who received funding from the Gestapo. In the concentration camp, Strasser heard peals that foreshadowed his death. Every day the artillery cannonade was heard louder and louder. The Nazis had only to look into the camp and deal with the enemy. It was a new trap. In this situation, he made every effort to prove to the French authorities that he was not a Nazi and a Hitlerite. In the end, they believed him. But freedom did not at all mean long-awaited salvation. Without money and connections, he could not hope to move to England. He rushed around the country, trying to escape from France. To no avail. Strasser witnessed the military downfall of that country. The Germans entered France. He was released from the concentration camp at the end of May, and on June 14, 1940, Paris capitulated. From the radio messages, he learned about the terms of the truce and that he was put on the wanted list. It was risky to be on the streets. Every police station now has a photo of him. He had no doubt: they would not take him alive. While in hiding, Otto did not know that his friend Richard Schapke had died. When Denmark was occupied, Richard tried to escape to Sweden on a fishing boat. She was shot in neutral waters.

Strasser's only chance of survival was to flee to Portugal. But the embassy of this country did not give a visa to a person without citizenship.

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danships. He was rescued by the turmoil caused by the war. The fact is that the embassy of the already occupied Holland still continued to operate in France. Apparently, they have given up on the problem of citizenship, granting it to everyone. It was the only opportunity to get to Portugal. On August 1, 1940, he left for this southern country.

Along the way, Strasser tried not to appear in public. And not in vain. According to the memoirs of V. Schellenberg, they were already going to intercept him in Spain or get him in Portugal itself. "Hitler hates Otto just as he hated his brother Gregor," SS Reichsführer Walter Schellenberg once said. "He regards both of them as his personal enemies. Hitler is convinced that Otto is just waiting for the opportunity to kill him and is working to carry out his plans together with the British and American secret services. Soon, Himmler, Schellenberg, and Heydrich, chief of the Imperial Security Main Office, were summoned to the Reich Chancellery."

"I have decided," the Fuhrer said, looking at Schellenberg, "to destroy Otto Strasser by any means. I order this task to be carried out personally bam.

From the reports of agents embedded in the Black Front, it became known that Otto Strasser was supposed to appear in Lisbon. To organize his assassination, Schellenberg received two tiny vials of poisonous serum, created on the instructions of the SD. For two weeks, Gestapo agents and assistants they hired tried to locate the leader of the Black Front, but all efforts were in vain.

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Strasser got to Portugal by detours. He did not dare to take the direct train from Madrid to Lisbon. In Portugal, he thought of hiding in a Benedictine monastery, where his brother Paul was a monk. But the German elite demanded that the Salazar regime extradite Strasser. Therefore, having rested a little, it was again necessary to prepare for flight. But here he was more fortunate - England agreed to accept him. On October 2, 1940, the English steamer Excambion picked up the ill-fated fugitive. I didn't have to choose - the ship was going to Bermuda, English territory. To wait for another is to endanger life. But he did not linger on the sunny Bermuda either. Fate brought him to Canada.

Everything went well at first. Otto was received kindly at the Canadian Foreign Office. There he offered services in the fight against fascism and even tried to form the "German Liberation Movement". And then the problems began, at first the US Congress reared up: they had never heard of this organization. Strasser makes another mistake: had he given up his anti-communist slogans at that moment and agreed to transfer the center of his movement to Moscow, he would have had no problems. But such principledness did not arouse approval from the Canadian government. It was decided not to allow this dubious German to participate in anti-fascist work.

The end of World War II pulled Strasser out of his political slumber. He officially dissolves the "Black Front" and creates the "League of German Renewal". He wants to work for the good of Germany. But

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again he will be disappointed. In the eastern zone of occupation (the future GDR) they do not want to see him. In the western zone of occupation (the future FRG), former military men are more willing to be involved in cooperation than incomprehensible politicians. For almost ten years, Otto Strasser sought the right to return to his homeland. It is not known whether his request would have been granted if it were not for the noise raised

English publicist Douglas Reed. His books attracted public attention, and in the mid-1950s Otto Strasser returned to Germany. He lived in the Federal Republic of Germany, where he founded the German Social Union, a radical organization that failed to achieve political success. The "personal enemy of Hitler" died on August 27, 1974 in Munich at the age of 76. The names of Otto Strasser and his brother Gregor in the 70s. were raised to the banner of the European "new right", which saw the ideal of a non-conformist revolutionary movement - the so-called "Third Way" - in early National Socialism. Hitler's Nazism they considered opportunism and perversion. Interest in the theory of Otto Strasser arose again in the 90s, after the unification of Germany. It was then that such organizations as the Fighting League of German Socialists and the reanimated German Social Union appeared.

Appendix No. 1 "14 THESES OF THE GERMAN REVOLUTION"

1. Before God and the whole world, the German Revolution will reject the lie about Germany's debts, reject the brutal violence of the extortionate "peace treaties" concluded at Versailles and Saint-Germain. By all means it will wage a relentless, fanatical struggle against this diktat and the agreements imposed by it.
 2. The German revolution proclaims the freedom of the German nation within the framework of a strong state embracing all the German tribes of the Central European space, which will stretch from Memel to Strasbourg, from Eupen to Vienna, which, embracing all the Germans of central Europe, in the blue lu of its size and power will become the backbone and heart of White Europe.
 5. The German revolution renounces the exploitation and oppression of other peoples and nations, it wants no more, no less than sufficient living space for the young German nation, recognizing to a large extent that the deepest contradictions between the injustice of some and the rights of other peoples and nations can only be resolved through war, which is the will of fate.
 4. The German Revolution proclaims the sole purpose of the state to be the consolidation of all the forces of the nation, the unanimous use of these forces in the name of preserving the life and securing the future of this nation, the support of what contributes to this goal and counteracts everything that hinders it. achievement.
 5. The German revolution requires the decisive introduction of a strong centralized authority directed against all separatist manifestations of the state, party and
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- confessional character. The unitary state of the German nation will bind together the forces that flow from natural and tribal traditions.
6. Having eliminated the unnatural liberal system, the German Revolution will give freedom to the development of the forces of estate self-government, which will complement the supreme tasks of the state. It will put in place of constitutional parliamentarism a living system of professional and class chambers, will replace the irresponsibility of the faceless masses with the personal responsibility of each and every one for the work he leads.
 7. The German Revolution proclaims the common fate of the German nation. But she realizes that fate does not consist in want or abundance, she approves of everything that leads to the realization of the fundamental principle: "The public good is higher than the personal."
 8. The German Revolution rejects capitalism, which is an individualistic economic system, whose downfall will be the key to the success of the German Revolution. It proclaims itself decisively as the bearer of the corporate system of socialism, proceeding from the fact that the spirit of the economy should serve the satisfaction of the needs of the nation, and not the acquisition of profit and wealth.

9. The German Revolution proclaims the supreme ownership of the state over soil, subsoil and minerals. Ayudi, endowed with fiefs, are only users who must report to the state how this property is used in the interests of the nation.

10. The German Revolution proclaims the equality of all working people to share in the receipt of profits and participation in the management of the national economy, which should be in the service of every people's comrade, whose personal profit is determined by the growth in the efficiency of the use of national property. The revolution recognizes personal interests, but only as a motor in a machine that should create the well-being of the nation.

11. The German Revolution sees the well-being of the nation not in the accumulation of material wealth, not in the endless improvement of living standards, but exclusively in the health of the God-given

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national organism, which is necessary. to fulfill the task set by fate.

12. The German revolution sees this task in the absolute disclosure of the unique national identity, and therefore fights with all its might against racial degeneration, alien domination, advocating popular renewal and purification, for German culture. In particular, this struggle will be waged against Jewry, which, in alliance with associations of a supranational nature (Masonry and ultramontanism), destroys the national will and the people's soul.

13. The German revolution fights against the dominance of the Jewish-Roman law, advocating German law, which would become a bridge to the German man and his honor, recognizing and paying tribute to the inequality of people. German law recognizes only people's comrades as citizens, and the measure of things for it is the common good.

14. The German Revolution will destroy the world picture created by the Great French Revolution and shape the image of the 20th century. The German revolution is national because it opposes the enslavement of the German nation; social, because it fights against the tyranny of capital; popular, because it opposes the destruction of the German soul. All this is for the nation. And the nation, having cast aside its fear of struggle, despite great sacrifices and bloody wars, wants a revolution. She wants a revolution, because Germany must live!

Appendix No. 2 Otto Strasser WE WELCOME A NEW WAR

It's August 1st again! Again, the thoughts of all Germans return to the day from which we are separated by 16 years, to the day that is evaluated in completely different ways.

"If only there were no war," roar the huge crowds nurtured by the Marxist heresy, seeing in the war the result of economic machinations; crowds whose desired goal is the "consent" of all peoples, who are willing to sacrifice the freedom of their people.

"If only there were no war," echo the slogans of the "recognized" press, full of fear and horror, brave townfolk, carrying the poison of pacifism to the masses, hiding behind partly humanistic phrases, partly imaginary religiosity.

"As long as there is no war," the respectable patriots groan, full of pride in the glorious past. But, adhering to "sober prudence", they deny the possibility of war and, proudly, call their cowardice "realpolitik".

With violent rage or sad memories, but they all do not accept August 1st. They squeal in terror as the blood-red word "war" pops up again in front of them.

But we welcome war! We hail August 1, 1914 as the beginning of the spiritual, mental, physically violent upheaval that we call the German

revolution! Full of satisfaction, we salute her, as she will tear off the crust with which the German soul is covered; we salute her, full of gratitude to those who fought on the fronts, whose sacrifices and death kept us alive; we salute her by swearing an oath to fulfill her spirit as the completion of the translation

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THE BURST OF THE GERMAN REVOLUTION. We, the soldiers of the great war, the receptive German youth, have long known that all events have a meaning, that every sacrifice brings a triumph closer, that every death is the door to a new life. We laugh at the liberal fairy tales about the "eternal progress of mankind", and the dominance of the human spirit implanted with such pomp for us is nothing more than idolatry. FATE has shown that war and death are just as necessary and merciful as peace and life.

But we believe in fate, because in the horrendous disasters of war we saw the birth pangs of the new time, the TIME of NATIONAL FREEDOM and SOCIAL JUSTICE, which we call in one word: "National Socialism".

NATIONAL FREEDOM ~ we call not the overthrow of the Versailles yoke, the reparation slavery of Dawes and Jung, not the miserable existence of the German people. For us, this is the creation of the German middle Europe - the THIRD REICH.

Do you believe that a high price can be paid for such a goal?! Do you believe that there is no other way to get rid of enslavement and bondage, except by using force? Do you believe that only war will tear us out of the fetters of Versailles?

The logic of history teaches clearly and unambiguously: only war can restore the lost freedom. Fate cannot be cheated or changed. There is only one thing left for us - to fulfill or not the WILL OF FATE.

FREEDOM and WAR? Or SLAVERY and PEACE?! This question asks us the fate of Germany. And no other!!!

Our answer is clear and precise: FREEDOM and WAR!!! But this is only half, and it, like any other half, is not viable! Is it possible to wage a war just because someone thinks that Germany now needs a war?

War must find a response in the hearts of the people, find approval in their minds. An ardent will must become its breeding ground, only then will it end in victory and achieve its goal. THE NUTRITIONAL MEDIUM OF THE GERMAN WAR OF LIBERATION IS THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

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SOCIAL JUSTICE is not only the collapse of the domination of money, capitalism and exploitation, but at least a new interpretation of life, it is the fulfillment of an inner vocation, one's own school, one's own small homeland, a happy wife and joyful children, secure old age and peaceful death - what we call GERMAN WITH CIALISM!

Do you think that for such a purpose one generation would be a high price? Will you send huge forces to fight for freedom in order to achieve such a goal? Do you think a handful of mercenaries of world capitalism will be able to resist the will of 60 million people?

REVOLUTION and WAR - one is not conceivable without the other, they are meaningless separately. Only together they will protect the people! Or do you not know that all INTERVENTION WARS

END IN FAILURE? Don't you know that the detachments of the revolution are ALWAYS stronger than the well-armed armies of Denikin and Wrangel?!

The flame of the revolutionary heart is stronger than the discipline of the interventionist armies, and the ebullition of the fighting force of the socialist revolution is more powerful than the modern weapons of the mercenaries of imperialism!

WHAT IS OUR VICTORY? To the same extent, the sober logic of history and our warm heart!!! And since we represent both of these factors, since fate itself speaks through our mouths, since we recognize both war and revolution, we know that the hour of their double birth will be the grand final act of what was begun on August 1 .

With this knowledge and confidence, we welcome August 1st.

WE WELCOME THE COMING REVOLUTIONARY WAR!

Appendix No. H

MANIFESTO OF THE "BLACK FRONT"

Action Program of the "Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary

National Socialists, adopted by the Second Imperial Congress at Lauenstein Castle on October 2-4, 1931

In painful manifestations of the crisis, the liberal system dies. Capitalism, born of the liberal system, is no longer able to guarantee the German people food, clothing and housing, which resulted in monstrous poverty of the broad masses, proletarian unemployment and the destruction of the peasantry.

A liberal social and state structure, a civil class state and parliamentary democracy can no longer organically unite and use the forces of the German people, who, trying to eliminate internal contradictions and strengthen external influences, will come to the need to assert national freedom.

The liberal understanding of culture, rationalism and materialism deprived the German man of the meaning of life and gave birth in his soul to anxiety, meaninglessness, despair, whose domination destroys any society from within.

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The fundamental law of the capitalist economy is "the inviolability of private property"; the basic teaching of capitalist economics is the creation of an international world economy crowned by a single gold standard.

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As long as these pillars of the capitalist economic system exist, there will be no change in the present plight of Germany!

The essence of today's class order and parliamentary democracy lies in the unnatural stratification of society, which is based on the power of money and in which profession and vocation contradict each other in 97 out of 100 cases. This unnatural stratification causes ever stronger conflicts in the people's organism, which deplete its life-affirming power and at the same time cause the compulsory dependence of the nation. The dominance of materialism, which manifested itself in a grotesque overestimation of the human spirit and

its creations, especially technology, more and more remove the life of the German man from the sources of his being: nature, history, fate, God. Materialism made his life restless, without vital roots, meaningless. The denial of all national virtues and the disappearance of religiosity were bound to lead sooner or later to fatal consequences—to the denial of life.

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Realizing these facts, their causes and consequences, the Black Front is striving for a total revolution that will destroy the current economic system, state, culture and create a new order based on the commonality of the nation and its specific features, manifested in the economy, state and culture.

This revolution is socialist because it denies private ownership of land, minerals, minerals and means of production and proclaims a German form of hereditary fief, which is equally hostile to Western capitalism and ordinary Bolshevism. At the same time, the revolution presupposes the withdrawal of the German, socialist national economy from the international world economy, which should subsequently lead to the natural appearance of its own currency within the framework of the German planned economy. The purpose of a planned economy is to satisfy

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Satisfying the demand of the German people, which requires the agrarianization of Germany, the internal colonization and resettlement of the urban population, absolute autarky and a monopoly on foreign trade.

This revolution is nationalist, because it seeks within the organic estate state, and outside the national freedom of Germany. Internal transformations are the condition for a national war of liberation, which will break by force the chains of Versailles and the South, which are now squeezing Germany. Only the achievement of this national freedom will guarantee that Germany will be able to live in peace with all the peoples of Europe and the world. This peace will be based on attention to the essence and characteristics of other peoples, whose nationalism has the same right to exist and develop as long as it is required for this people. The main internal law of the new German state will be based on the self-government of the free estates, which is far from either a one-man fascist state or anonymous parliamentarism. Only under this condition will it be possible to create a Greater German state.

This revolution is popular, because it returns back to the sources of people's life, it knows and confirms that fateful conditioning of our people's German life and sees in its development the fulfillment of the meaning of Being - "God's Will". The revival of religiosity free from church dogma is as necessary as the joyful confidence in recognizing the idealistic worldview as the main component of the conservative essence.

Thus, the Black Front understands the German Revolution as:

SOCIALIST in the economic sphere

NATIONALIST in the public sphere

PEOPLE in the cultural sphere.

The "Black Front" fights with inexorable firmness against the front of the system, and it does not matter whether the black-white-red flag of conservative reaction or the black red-gold flag of liberal reaction fly over it. He knows

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No, the struggle against the reactionary front will lead to an alliance with the red front, the front of the liberal revolution. But such cooperation will end with the collapse of the system, and then

A FIGHT BETWEEN BLACKS AND REDS, on the outcome of which the German future will depend. Believing in fate, paying tribute to the sacrificial death of millions during the great war and post-war battles, we will lead the Black Front to victory in this struggle, as we love Germany.

Heil Germany!

Application No. 4

CIRCULAR LETTER BY ULRICH OLDENBURG

concerning the elections to the Reichstag on July 31, 1932 "German Socialist Fighting Movement", Charlottenburg

To all comrades and socialists!!!

Berlin, June 18, 1932

The leadership of the "German Socialist Fighting Movement" decided to form their own electoral lists in all 35 constituencies for the elections to the Reichstag, which are to be held on June 31, 1932. Our participation in the Reichstag elections is measured by the following points of view:

1. The boycott of elections only strengthens our opponents and is perceived by them as a symbol of our weakness.
2. Revolutionary nationalism can no longer remain the privilege of office workers, it must become the common property of the masses.
3. When looking at the people, it must be recognized that they have reached a degree of maturity to start a revolution.
4. Due to the imminent collapse within the NSDAP, it is necessary that we attract the attention of the socialists and revolutionaries who are still in the Nazi party.
5. Elections seem like an opportunity to declare

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about our movement and our ideas. The name "Combat Movement" will be promoted at the expense of the state:

- a) on all official ballots;
- 6) on pedestals;
- c) in official reports of the authorities (district and central newspapers).

The implementation of the unified leadership of the election campaign was entrusted to comrade-in-arms Oldenburg, who headed the leadership of the imperial election bureau of the "German Socialist Fighting Movement". All questions relating to the elections should be sent only to Comrade Oldenburg at the address: Charlottenburg, Berlin-2, Kantstrasse 22, telephone number: Steinplatz 9985. For an answer, send an envelope or money for payment

postal services, as our funds are very limited. Donations are accepted to the postal savings account of Georg Fischer.

During elections, leaflets are a very effective tool, which should be distributed in the following directions:

a) sending to friends and relatives as a printed publication;

6) distribution at railway stations, which would guarantee their entry into those areas where we do not have our representatives;

c) distribution of leaflets in the villages;

d) use of the telephone directory. Individual comrades, after studying the telephone directory, send a leaflet to 5-6 villagers, not forgetting the owner of the local restaurant. The necessary funds for this must be obtained independently. If each comrade donates a stamp, this will be quite enough to supply leaflets to 5 villages. Orders for flyers should be sent now. They will be shipped after the postage has been reimbursed. To a limited extent, promotional numbers of the "German Revolution" may be sent.

The leadership of the imperial electoral bureau of the "German Socialist Fighting Movement" urgently asks for

comrades from the following constituencies: Baden, Rhine-Palatinate, Cologne, Aachen, Hesse-Darmstadt, Thuringia.

Heil Germany!

Ulrich Oldenburg, Reich President of the Electoral Committee of the "German Socialist Fighting Movement"

List of used abbreviations

NSDAP — National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany

SA - NSDAP assault squads

SS - security units of the NSDAP

KGRNS - “Combat Commonwealth of Revolutionary National Socialists”

KKE - Communist Party of Germany

NSKD - "National Socialist Combat Association of Germany" ANSAP - German National Socialist Labor Para

tiya ANTIFA - "Union against fascism"

NSBO - National Socialist Production Cells.

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ANDREY VASYLCHENKO

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